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DUTY AND INCLINATION :

A NOVEL.

EDITED BY

MISS LANDON,

AUTHOR OF "THE IMPROVISATRICE,"

"ETHEL CHURCHILL," ETC.

"Thought contending with thought ;
Reason and the affections at variance with each other."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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DUTY AND INCLINATION.

CHAPTER I.

“ O ye pure inmates of the gentle breast,
Truth, Freedom, Love, O where is your abode?”

BEATTIE.

THROUGH the medium of a servant who had been sent from the Park to London, Oriana had been made acquainted with the illness of Philimore, who lay extended on the bed of sickness, while she was denied the gratification of watching by his side; the poignancy of her affliction being aggravated by the idea that she had been herself the cause of his illness, arising doubtless from cold caught on the day of their last interview. In the agony of her soul, she was at one time tempted to fly to him, to allow no hindrance to stop her; and by so doing, reveal at once, undisguisedly and publicly, the claims he held upon her.

In secret she gave herself up to excessive sorrow,—portrayed in her imagination the frightful image of the dissolution of him to whom her affections had been so long linked in sweet connexion. Unhappy Oriana! wrapt in silent woe or in murmuring sounds, wild and frantic, nought could assuage her grief but the persuasion that if Philimore died she would not long survive him: “That moment,” she exclaimed, “which consigns him to the tomb, will also strike the fatal blow at me! Death will be welcome, it will end a life that would be miserable without him!”

The physician who had been called to attend upon Philimore did not hesitate to pronounce his complaint an affection of the lungs; softening, however, the case to his parents, by assuring them that he did not entertain any immediate fears of danger.

Philimore had dreaded nothing so much as that the intelligence of his illness should reach Oriana; the idea of the anguish she would suffer on his account seeming worse a thousand times than the acute bodily pain he endured.

From a second and third messenger, however, Oriana had each time the satisfaction of hearing that her Philimore was better; and she became still more solaced by the hope of again receiving his invaluable letters as soon as an improved state of convalescence would enable him to write; she having experienced no difficulty in receiving his communications, which were often delivered even in the presence of her aunt, who never, by the slightest curiosity, expressed a de-

sire to learn who was her correspondent; a facility which greatly reconciled her residence at the Park, and consequent separation from her family.

The obsequious and polite Sir Howard had in the meantime so much won upon the attention of the General, that he as well as his lady became less desirous of quitting London than they had been previous to the intimacy formed with him.

Mrs. Herbert began to feel uneasiness on the score of his frequent visits, lest he should prove a second Harcourt. Having succeeded in dismissing the one, she was determined also, if possible, to counteract the views of the other, commencing her interference by saying what she thought might best depreciate him in the estimation of Rosilia; who, not aware of her artful designs, sometimes defended Sir Howard against her imputations, which she conceived were unmerited, but which gave Mrs. Herbert cause to suspect that in so doing she was not wholly disinterested, and that her inclinations, which she had fondly hoped would have been reserved to bless her son, had already become excited in favour of another.

“Ah,” said she one day, in a disconsolate tone, “I see how it is, you are ambitious of a title, which has caused you to decide so prematurely. Truly,” continued she ironically, “to be styled Your Ladyship! my Lady Sinclair! may well compensate for many deficiencies.”

Indignant at the charge, Rosilia for a moment

maintained a proud silence; but when she considered it was the friend of her infancy who had thus spoken, her age also claiming respect, she hesitated no longer to rescue herself from a suspicion so ill-grounded, but declared at once her real opinion and sentiments: "Sir Howard," added she, "is, I am certain, too discreet, and too much a man of discernment, to put my acceptance or refusal of him to the test, as he must doubtless be convinced that if he were to be thus tempted, mortification and disappointment only would be the result."

Mrs. Herbert would have replied, but Rosilia had disappeared.

On finding herself alone, and her real sentiments prevailing undisguised by artifice, Mrs. Herbert wondered that Rosilia could have broached an opinion so decided, a resolution so firm: "So difficult to please," thought she, "perhaps her Edward might meet with a like fate." The mother's partiality, however, placed the subject in a more favourable light, and she waited with renewed impatience her son's return to England.

It happened, however, that the bright expectations she formed, as to the fruition of her long-cherished scheme, met with a most formidable check by the General and his family removing to other lodgings, which, in the vexation she felt, she inwardly attributed to the machinations of Sir Howard.

He had taken them to look at a small but beautifully furnished house not far from the neighbour-

hood of Portland-place, and which by his address and recommendation he succeeded in procuring for them. Quick and keen-sighted as he ever was in forming conclusions of what might militate against the plans he had formed, Mrs. Herbert's dry salutation whenever he called upon her friends had not escaped him; but what was the most annoying to him in her conduct, whenever he intended to avail himself of a vacant chair by the side of Rosilia, Mrs. Herbert, as if purposely to oppose his so doing, was always certain to throw herself into it. "The cursed inquisitive looks of that beldame," ejaculated he upon quitting her house; "I must try to get rid of her, or she may outwit me." With such a determination, he contrived to draw away Rosilia and her parents from under her roof, to which they had been induced to consent by the airy situation of the new house, and the fine prospect it commanded.

Becoming nearly a daily visitor at their new residence, Sir Howard was so assiduous in forming some new engagement to enliven and steal away time that Rosilia could no longer complain of the monotony of her life. It was to the civilities and contrivances of Sir Howard she was at this period indebted for her every gratification. It was the merits of Sir Howard to which her attention was continually being attracted. Whence came it then that she still remained unconfiding and mistrustful of him? Did it originate in a too nice and sensitive delicacy that she thus shrunk from his notice, timidly to retire within

herself? or might it be that her heart was shielded by former impressions?

Such could not be the case, her secret partiality for Douglas having found admittance to her imagination merely: having never met with the approval of her understanding, it never took deep root in her heart, and hence, with the knowledge of his marriage, hope becoming utterly expelled, left her for the future perfectly at liberty to indulge in the conjugal sentiment. But however gracious and agreeable might be the general address, conversation, and deportment of Sir Howard, he did not convey to Rosilia that something, indefinable to herself, constituting the man of true worth, and which in the enthusiasm of her soul she looked for,—truth, wisdom, goodness, benevolence of heart, that truly which ennobles man. Sir Howard appeared presumptuous in his gallantry, and from casual circumstances she was sometimes disposed to doubt the strict veracity of his principles. She might judge harshly, or she might see but through the medium of her own peculiar susceptibility; be this as it may, it was reserved for Sir Howard to appear in a light still more amiable than hitherto.

It was one delightful evening towards the latter end of May, when Sir Howard proposed an excursion into the country. Having made an engagement with a friend, the General declined forming one of the party. Rolling leisurely along, the road on either side exhibiting a rich and picturesque scenery, Mrs.

De Brooke and Rosilia found themselves upon a sudden embosomed in a recess the most luxuriant and flowery. Sir Howard called to the driver to stop; he wished to alight. It was just at the entrance of a little pathway, overshadowed by trees, whose entwining branches formed a sort of arbour. It seemed a spot formed for Dryads, or where an eremite might meditate without fear of disturbance.

Thus thought Rosilia, when there suddenly appeared in the winding path a figure, tall, slight, and fragile, bent by years and infirmity, whose aspect was that of poverty; supported by crutches he moved slowly and feebly along; a faint smile cheered his withered countenance as his eyes, sunk beneath furrowed brows, rested with complacency upon Sir Howard, before whom he stopped.

“May heaven reward you!” said he, addressing him in broken accents, “may heaven bless you, my good, my honoured sir!”

“How does Madge?” inquired Sir Howard in accents of benignity.

“She be quite well, and she’ll be a deal glad to see you if you be coming down to the cot.”

In attempting to turn he dropped one of his crutches, and would have fallen to the ground had he not been supported by Sir Howard, who, begging Mrs. De Brooke to excuse him for a few minutes, proceeded on with his venerable companion.

Deeply participating in this interesting scene, as soon as Rosilia, by an abrupt turning, lost sight of

the receding figures, she, with her mother's consent, flew swiftly to the spot whence they had disappeared, where a small neat hut presented itself, screened from observation, behind the little lattice of which she stopped, fearful of intruding, and through which she could hear Sir Howard's inquiries relative to the furniture and other conveniences of the cottage, accompanied by promises to supply every want, with the thanks, blessings, and prayers of those guileless spirits, who being so near the regions of the blest, might, thought Rosilia, assuredly be heard in behalf of their benefactor.

"My honest friends," at length said Sir Howard, "I can stop no longer; fare ye well!"

Scarcely had he put his foot without than he caught sight of Rosilia: "Alone! can she be alone!" ejaculated he; when upon looking round to ascertain the fact, he perceived Mrs. De Brooke slowly advancing.

Frustrated in his hopes he hurried towards her, and offered the support of his arm.

"Which way shall we bend our course?" inquired he; "amongst these sylvan scenes awhile, or to the barouche?"

"Not, I hope," answered Rosilia, "until we have entered that sweet little cottage, and made acquaintance with its owners."

Mrs. De Brooke seconding her daughter's wish, Sir Howard, stepping in with alacrity, brought out two wicker chairs for the fair visitors of Madge.

'Tis in habitations such as these, where the honest peasant dwells, where content smiles through indigence, that the affluent, the proud, may learn to bound their wishes, and perceive the vanity of wealth. A neat simplicity adorned the rustic cot, and poor old Madge, the wife of the aged labourer already described, hobbled forth, oppressed with years, but with all the testimonies of cordiality, to welcome his visitors. She had been just employed in the task of feeding some newly hatched chickens, which Rosilia begged she would continue, lending also her assistance, often desisting from her work to fondle and cherish the little half-fledged fluttering things.

Obliged at length to obey the mandate of her mother, she turned to follow her, when, as she did so, she caught Sir Howard's deep and penetrating eye. What a child! what infantine simplicity! thought he; yet combined with a judgment so mature, an intelligence so rich! Surely she is a riddle; the more I study her, the less I appear to understand her. Recollecting himself he was quickly at the side of Mrs. De Brooke, to whom he was ever cautious of paying his chief attentions.

"'Tis truly a neat and comfortable asylum," said she, "bestowed, if I judge aright, by the hand of charity, where age may find a shelter from the buffets of adversity."

She would gladly have extracted some little history relative to the venerable pair; but Sir Howard, with an apparent reserve, seemed desirous of evading

the information, and all that she could gather was that they had been very poor and in great distress, that he had known them to be honest and industrious domestics, formerly in the service of his father, and as they were too infirm any longer to assist themselves, he felt happy it had fallen to his lot to supply their little wants.

“And is poor old Margery capable of attending to all the concerns of the cottage,” inquired Rosilia, “within as well as without?”

“She has nothing to do, poor soul,” answered Sir Howard, “but sit at her spinning-wheel and feed her poultry; all beside is performed by a robust country girl.”

He sought to change the topic, and soon after arrived at the barouche in waiting.

The shades of evening were already advanced, but Sir Howard solicited the permission of Mrs. De Brooke to proceed a little further previous to returning home, in order to enjoy the view of a dell, remarkable for its extent, beauty, and romantic appearance.

CHAPTER II.

“ Though smooth his voice and calm his gentle mien,
Still seems there something he would not have seen ;
His features’ deepening lines and varying hue
At times attracted, yet perplexed the view,
As if within that murkiness of mind
Work’d feelings fearful, and yet undefined.”

BYRON.

ON the return of Mrs. De Brooke and Rosilia from their little excursion, how delighted were they to find their beloved Oriana waiting to receive them in company with her father !

After an affectionate embrace, they inquired to what cause they might owe her unexpected appearance. Mrs. Arden’s carriage requiring some slight repair, Oriana had embraced the opportunity of its being sent to the coachmaker, to enjoy the happiness of visiting her family, having promised to return to her aunt with the vehicle.

Having taught herself to submit with greater fortitude to the chances and vicissitudes attending upon her attachment, Oriana, whose appearance had much faded since she had left her paternal home, began again to improve. The letters she received from Philimore, though less frequent than formerly,

poured into her soul the balm of consolation; and if less impassioned or warm in the effusions of love, conceiving it his duty to support her weaknesses, strengthen her judgment, and finally raise her contemplations to the primary Author of all that was most perfect and excellent, they were generally replete with exalted sentiment and luminous intelligence, which appeared to Oriana as springing from the purest affection, guided by the discretion and rationality of one who was to become her future partner; it never occurred to her that the once enthusiastic, ardent flame of Philimore was abating.

To promote the final re-establishment of his health, Philimore had absented himself from London with his father, and as their return was not immediately expected, Oriana was denied the happiness of seeing him, a regret prevailing over her mind, notwithstanding the consolations derived from the company of her sister, who in the communications made her, dwelt upon the agreeable change in her life, in the manner of passing time, since she had renewed acquaintance with Sir Howard Sinclair.

“Do you not recollect him,” said she, “when at Valpée Lodge?”

“Can he be the same Sir Howard,” inquired Oriana, after replying in the affirmative, “whose character I have heard so much traduced for his gallantries; who makes it his boast that he never yet found a woman to resist his seductions?”

Rosilia started and turned pale, not from any sug-

gestion either in favour of or against Sir Howard, but that there were in the world those of such a character who could make it their boast and glory to subdue and triumph over the fame and honour of her sex, cruel and unrelenting, leaving them with blasted virtue to shame and derision. Recovering herself, she told her sister she did not think Sir Howard Sinclair could be the person alluded to, from his general goodness, his love of literature, his humanity towards the poor; dwelling with pathos on the interesting scene she had so recently witnessed.

“Do not, my dear sister,” replied Oriana, in her turn assuming the monotone, “place a too great reliance on such seeming worth; appearances are often deceitful.”

“But,” continued Rosilia, “admitting your remarks to be true in the case of Sir Howard, they can in no way affect me, since I regard him merely in the light of an agreeable acquisition to our acquaintance during the short period we remain in town.”

“For my part,” Oriana rejoined, “I cannot but think him the identical Sir Howard I have heard spoken of as a professed man of pleasure, and as such, what gratification could he derive from the company of either my father or mother? Be assured, Rosilia, his constant visits here are on your account.”

“Well, my dear Oriana,” replied Rosilia smiling, “we shall be shortly transported to the shades again, and then your fears for my safety will end.”

Scarcely had she finished speaking, when the General, entering from his morning's walk, accosted his daughters with an air of pleasure, telling them that he had accidentally met with a former acquaintance, a gentleman whom he doubted not they would be very glad to see, for which reason he had invited him to come and spend the evening with them. Oriana felt assured it could not be Philimore, and to any other visitor she felt indifferent.

“Who can he be?” exclaimed Rosilia.

“Who but Frederic Valpée,” replied the General; “and, my dear children, you have each of you my *carte blanche* for setting your caps at him, and rendering yourselves as agreeable as you please, for I assure you the happy girl whom Frederic Valpée selects for his bride will be the envy of many a fair nymph, possessing as he does every advantage which youth, a handsome person, fortune, title in reserve, graceful and amiable manners can possibly bestow; rejoiced indeed should I be to obtain a son-in-law of such worth, so highly estimable in every respect.”

There was a time when the heart of Oriana would most fervently have acknowledged and beat in unison to the merited encomiums of Frederic Valpée; but now that heart was no longer in her own possession. He might still claim her esteem, but her affections were otherwise disposed of. She recollected the flattering homage he had paid to her musical talents during the time which had fled so pleasantly away while celebrating his birthday, the preference by

which he had distinguished her in handing her to the top of the room to open the ball with him. Philimore was then but little known to her, and her heart, free as the breeze which sports upon the summer meadow, had bounded with delight to the attentions of the amiable Valpée.

At the appointed hour Valpée was announced, and with ease and grace presented himself to Mrs. De Brooke. Having mixed more with the world, and entirely quitted his college avocations, his manners, though somewhat tinctured with reserve, were less so than formerly; he asked after the Misses De Brooke, whom, being seated in a back drawing-room, opening into the front by folding-doors, he did not immediately perceive.

“There they are to speak for themselves,” replied their mother.

He turned, and with a mild respectful air bowed, and advanced to join them.

The conversation turned upon Sir Charles and Lady Valpée, of whom he spoke with the most filial regard. In the corner of the apartment stood the harp of Oriana, which recalled the memory of the past; he fain would renew, by a repetition of its tones, but scarce dared to express the desire he felt of being thus indulged.

A graceful negligence and disengaged ease invested Oriana, such as is seldom met with but in females whose manners have been improved by intercourse with the other sex, and have, in consequence, lost

those feelings of restraint that often so much encumber those who have not experienced such associations. To the voluptuary or refined sensualist Oriana, fortunately for herself, having within her the germ of coquetry, was far from interesting,—appearing as a plant whose leaves were too expanded, conveying not that charm, as the unblown bud, as was imaged in Rosilia, upon which imagination might stray exhaustless, in picturing to itself its sweet unfoldings, its fragrance opening imperceptibly, as by successive developments, inhaled by none—save him who knew to estimate its value, and had dearly won it.

Nevertheless, no woman was more calculated to charm and fascinate the amiable Valpée than Oriana. Secretly flattered by the recollections of the past, or desirous of retaining his former favourable opinion of her, or perhaps from a wish merely to please, though her affections were engaged to another; she doubtless considered it no error to esteem Frederic Valpée, from whichever motive she was influenced, and succeeded in winning those attentions from him, which a more retired fair might have found some difficulty in accomplishing. It was reserved, therefore, for Oriana, who, as her animation increased, more than had been of late customary in the absence of Philimore, to draw, as it were, Valpée from himself, from the usual concentration of his feelings, to cause him to discover, by insensible degrees, those shining attainments by which he was endowed equally by na-

ture as by culture,—the lustre of those unsullied morals, and depth of thought, originating in a noble, reflective, and elevated mind. He could no longer resist the inclination to solicit Oriana's skill in striking the harp he saw before him, with which she graciously complied, and the soul of Valpée vibrated responsive to each melting sound which was expiring in the last breath of song, when Sir Howard Sinclair was announced, introducing a friend by the name of Mr. Melliphant.

The former being known to Valpée, and being in the habit of meeting in the circles they frequented, entered into some short conversation; after which, conducting Melliphant to Rosilia, Sir Howard told her that he was a great amateur, if not connoisseur in painting, and that, with her permission, he would take the liberty of unfolding her portfolio, which remained closed upon an adjoining table. With an apparent humility of mien, Mr. Melliphant renounced his pretensions to such unequivocal praise, when some specimens of Rosilia's performances being laid before him, he selected from the group one which immediately struck him as a likeness of the fair artist herself, notwithstanding it seemed designed for a representation of Thomson's young Lavinia.

While gazing on it, his countenance betrayed the strongest feeling, and turning his eye upon Rosilia, he found the features similar, though she had somewhat failed in the expression. The countenance was more brilliant than touching, and did not convey to

the soul that perfect image of chaste innocence he beheld in the original, and from which he felt confirmed in the persuasion, that it was almost impossible for an artist, in painting himself, to give the full characteristic of his own physiognomy, however great his talent, or however successful he might be in those of others.

After deep examination, another resemblance claimed his notice, infinitely more striking than the former. It was her sister herself, drawn as the goddess Euterpe. The same animated sensible countenance as he had seen her when seated at her harp, upon his first entrance.

“What a delightful talent!” said he, drawing towards Rosilia the finished piece still held in his hand; “you make the ivory live.”

A modest suffusion overspread her cheek while she observed, “that the approbation of one who she heard was so great an adept in the art was extremely flattering to her, but that no doubt, notwithstanding his praise, he had seen much to criticise.”

Mr. Melliphant, from his near intimacy with Sir Howard, having frequently heard Rosilia much extolled by him, had felt the most insuperable curiosity to behold her. He was endued by nature with some talent, strong and ardent in his feelings, wild and irregular in his passions, but of mild, equable, and temperate manners. Skilful in concerting plans, diligent and persevering in their execution; corrupt at heart, without principle of honour, he attached no

real value to the esteem which virtue generally commands ; such was he who then sat opposite to Rosilia, viewing her from time to time with a jealous and perturbed soul, whilst, with folded arms and head reclined, he seemed indifferent to all that passed, with the exception of those divine strains issuing from the magic fingers of Oriana.

And what was there in the countenance of Melliphant so incomprehensible to Rosilia, as she caught his momentary glance—accustomed, by her art of taking likenesses, to Lavaterise human expression, to portray the spirit of the face, either gay or pensive, serene or melancholy,—that she could not interpret his? His aspect pale, his brow lowering, still in that sombre hue and deep-searching eye there was a something not altogether repelling, a something that might excite interest, and lead to the supposition that Melliphant possessed a mind preying upon itself from some secret adverse fortune. It was sufficient to be unhappy, to claim the commiseration of Rosilia.

The person of Melliphant was nicely proportioned, and when he spoke his voice combined a modulation of tone with an eloquence rarely met with ; every phrase he uttered riveted attention.

Sir Howard and Mr. Valpée also had each rendered themselves agreeable ; the former, wholly unable to suppress a species of adulation common to him, had paid almost his exclusive attentions to Rosilia, and yet had not forborne to join in general con-

versation. Oriana had felt she was as well entertained as she could possibly expect to be in any company except Philimore's, and regretted the hour when the party dispersed.

"Well," said Mrs. De Brooke after the guests had retired, "and which of our girls, think you, has made the conquest of the amiable Valpée?"

"Indeed," replied the General, "they had both their beaux, and I was happy to find it was so, as I should be sorry to see my dear girls rivals of each other."

Notwithstanding the late insinuations of Oriana respecting the character of Sir Howard, Rosilia had never felt so much disposed to be pleased with him as since the evening of their excursion to the cottage. In administering to the infirmities and necessities of his late father's servants, he appeared to her in a light at once generous, humane, and filial. It was indeed an act such as any possessing goodness of heart might have been happy to perform. But as Rosilia, from her first acquaintance with Sir Howard, feared that the judgment she had passed upon him was too severe, it was now with pleasure she recalled to mind his benevolent conduct, which induced her to think that the failings she had perceived might have originated in her own want of due discrimination.

Rosilia, however, with all her nice discernment, had yet to learn how difficult it is for dim-sighted mortals to form a correct estimate of those interior motives that sway the heart and lead to human action.

In Sir Howard's conduct Rosilia had perceived only the outward demonstrations of humanity ; had it been possible for her to have penetrated the source, and to have seen revealed those vicious feelings which had induced the act she so much admired, how greatly would her sensitive nature have shuddered at the contemplation !

Those old people, it is true, had been servants of the late Sir Howard Sinclair ; but those old people also had a grand-daughter, whom Sir Howard had taken into his service ; she was of a simple rustic mien, but fair withal. The poor child was an orphan, and the old people had cherished the memory of her parents in the care they had bestowed upon her. Like the vulture, however, greedy of its innocent prey, Sir Howard by his arts stole from them this their only treasure, and to conceal from them the baseness of his despicable seduction, removed to a distance the deluded couple,—loaded them with his favours,—the wages of their child's prostitution. Of which being ignorant, they poured blessings upon him, whose bounties they would have spurned had they known the cause whence they had sprung,—would but have heaped upon them misery, and brought down their “ grey hairs with sorrow to the grave” !

Thus it is that few can pass a definitive judgment upon the actions of their fellow-men, until by a clear relation of facts, and a complete development of cause and effect, are exhibited in their true colours the motives by which they are actuated.

CHAPTER III.

“ And oft, though wisdom wake, suspicion sleeps
 At wisdom’s gate, and to simplicity
 Resigns her charge, while goodness thinks no ill,
 Where no ill seems.”

MILTON.

IT was one of Sir Howard’s established maxims to take every opportunity of making advances upon the virtue of those whose beauty animated his efforts, and who were not sufficiently guarded to resist his attacks. Marriage, unconnected with worldly views, had never gained admission to his thoughts. Wealth, his idol, governed, and rendered every other inclination subordinate.

Thus, how inconsistent might seem his pursuit of Rosilia, she who had little else but her fair self to bestow, adorned by virtue, gifted by talent, recommendations undoubtedly more than equivalent for his adventitious circumstances and the boasted honour attached to his title! Why, in withdrawing herself from his adulations, did he persevere in obtruding them upon her, perfectly assured, as he might be, that those seductions, hitherto so triumphant with the many, with Rosilia could no longer avail him! From the knowledge he had acquired of her, he could not for one moment entertain the bare suggestion of subduing her virtue! To

raise himself in her favourable estimation was the only means, he felt persuaded, by which he might aspire to the affections of her heart; and the greater the resistance he met with, the greater was his desire to obtain them,

“ As all impediments in fancy’s course
Are motives of more fancy.”

Daily perplexed between love and ambition, he was sensible of many a secret conflict. Sometimes he thought to subdue his flame, to fly from its object, and to see her no more. But such was the instability of his resolutions, that as soon as formed, so soon they were vanquished: and again, when led to seek her presence, a thousand times he felt tempted to throw his fortunes at her feet, and solicit her hand in marriage.

His self-love, however, again interposing, considering marriage as a traffic: “ And what,” he asked himself, “ am I to gain in exchange for what I give? Not even the certainty of possessing her heart,—a form of loveliness, but a form divested of its life,—those love-beaming principles existing no doubt, but not as yet for me: and if thus to dispose of myself, thus to relinquish other considerations ever held in such high value by me, I ought at least to meet a compensation, a return of sentiment. I must be loved for myself alone, and that such is the case, I must, before I make an offer, obtain the most unequivocal proof.”

As nothing short of this could satisfy him, he still resolved to pursue every stratagem to secure to himself—vain and futile as was the effort,—the affection of

Rosilia ; in itself so free, so generously and spontaneously to be given, and which no wealth could purchase, no arts could ensnare.

Sir Howard possessed an income of 1000*l.* per annum, which he deemed barely adequate for his fashionable career. It was upon riches he founded his claim to importance ; riches could alone supply the enjoyments of luxury ; those voluptuous pleasures upon which the sensualist refines, and without which life appears but a mere vegetative existence, unproductive of enjoyment.

He had formed an acquaintance with a rich widow, who in some degree favoured his pretensions ; but being his senior by some years, she had in consequence lost the prepossessing attractions of youth. Her dowry, however, was ample, a weighty recommendation with Sir Howard, who would not have delayed his proposals, but for the tantalizing alternative that from that moment he must relinquish the views he had formed relative to Rosilia. Thus tossed by contending feelings, and uncertain as to the result of his passion, he thought proper to open the state of his case to Mr. Melliphant, his constant associate, to ask his counsel and assistance as to the manner in which he might best proceed.

Melliphant, who was a physician by profession and practice, drily replied : “ Think you my art extends to heal the distempers of the mind as well as those of the body ? Nevertheless, introduce me to your flame, after which I shall be better enabled to aid

you by my skill: let us feel our way, as we medical men feel the pulses of our patients.”

In the hope of securing permanent eminence, possessing ability in his profession, Melliphant had, to an otherwise handsome establishment, added a carriage, and had also launched into expenses his practical earnings were inadequate to support.

The constitution of Sir Howard not being sufficiently robust to enable him to combat with excess, Mr. Melliphant, from first attending him as his physician, became by degrees his inseparable companion,—perhaps chiefly arising from a similarity of taste and habits. Dissolute and vitiated alike, they confided in, and ever acted in mutual concert with each other’s plans, according to the deep subtleties of their reasonings, which linked them together by some secret spell. But if, in the general estimate of their characters, a similitude might be found to prevail, nevertheless in other respects there was an essential difference.

Sir Howard invariably maintained the air and splendour of a man of gallantry and fashion; on the contrary, the other, plain and unassuming in his manners, never seemed to wish to raise himself above the level of his condition; and, though gifted with talent, sought no occasion for its display.

With the most eager assiduity Sir Howard ever courted the company of the ostentatious and affluent. Melliphant, attaching little value to riches, honours, or distinctions, preferred the company of his equals or

even his inferiors in birth, if by so doing he could feel himself free to escape from the forms and punctilios which the high in station seem to exact as indispensable to their greatness.

Covetous of his possessions, Sir Howard never expended money but to advance his credit or pretensions. The other, prodigal and profuse, lavished even to the smallest mite he earned—to gratify a present wish or desire, he was wholly unmindful of the future. “Let us live to-day, for to-morrow we die!” was the thoughtless maxim by which he was swayed; and though dependent on the mere caprice of Fortune, the same patient endurance was ever his, appearing outwardly a Stoic, whilst in reality he was most truly an Epicurean. How enviable is the state of him who never allows himself to be either depressed by adversity, or elated by prosperity, arising as an effect of calm, profound, and philosophical contemplation; when the soul, acknowledging a Supreme Ruler of the universe, flies to rest itself on the bosom of that Glorious Being!

But alas! how different was it with Melliphant! that quiescent indifference he had acquired, proceeded from a soul blunt and callous to the events of life, and the sufferings of humanity! devoid of feeling for himself, he had none for others; sympathy and compassion were strangers to his heart. Accident, he believed, directed all things—whether good or ill fortune befell us, depended on the chance of a die; and what a folly, thought he, to place happiness upon

an issue so precarious! A superintending Providence! he scoffed at the idea; it involved, in his opinion, the utmost absurdity. Religion he affirmed to be nothing more than a code of reasoning calculated to frighten children and awe the weak-minded.

When acting in concert with each other, the natural volatility of Sir Howard was moderated by the sly, designing circumspection of Melliphant. Sir Howard possessed ingenuity and cleverness, but his understanding was superficial, light, and frivolous; Melliphant united a vivid fancy to strong conceptions. The one was too deficient in depth of judgment to conceal his artifices; the other by the most consummate art could completely act the hypocrite.

Though it was the aim of Sir Howard ever to appear the polished gentleman, yet he was often betrayed into a littleness of thought, an illiberality, the offspring of narrow prejudice; whilst the other, in his apparent humility and disengagedness from the affairs of life, manifested at times an enlargement and comprehension of intellect unbounded.

Manifold was the superiority of Melliphant over Sir Howard, whose predominating foibles, to sum them up, evidently originated in an inordinate self-conceit.

In his frequent visits to the De Brookes, after the introduction to them of Melliphant, who usually accompanied him, when Rosilia, reflective as was her disposition, was involuntarily led to draw comparisons between them with respect to their general sen-

timents and manners, in proportion as Sir Howard lost, Melliphant gained upon, her estimation: the former, of powers and abilities far inferior to the latter, could not so effectually throw a gloss upon his principles, but that a slight remark, a passing jest, apparently unimportant, would betray to Rosilia that he did not pay to moral rectitude its due regard. His intimacy and friendship with her parents increasing, as authorizing a greater familiarity, the assiduity and adulations he lavished on her person and accomplishments became more conspicuous.

Melliphant, on the contrary,—the apparently worthy and accomplished Melliphant,—seemed ever influenced in his conduct towards her by the utmost respect and deference: noticing with keen penetration the bent of her disposition, he was soon led to discover that Sir Howard was acting against himself in those open manifestations he made of his passion; that, like that plant which, at the slightest touch, shrinks within itself, the more he approached, the more she withdrew,—her affections being to be won only by degrees, and that only through the medium of what she was pleased to denominate virtue!

Sir Howard had introduced him to the DeBrookes with the view of profiting by his assistance and advice. As an abettor and coadjutor in his plots, no man might have proved of more signal use to him; nevertheless, in the present case, veiling himself and his views from Sir Howard, he resolved to act for himself alone, to profit by the occasion, and turn

the failure of Sir Howard to his own advantage. Difficult, indeed, and hazardous would be the task! but with such a prize in view, what a reward for perseverance! "What," thought he, "though Sir Howard is favoured by the parents, he is far from being so by the daughter, who conducts herself with such timid caution and reserve towards him, while her manners are free, easy, candid, and agreeable towards me, although but recently known to her."

Thus even more fascinated by her innocent confidence than her beauty, he resolved to keep over himself the strictest guard. The loss of her good opinion would ruin all. He must carefully avoid falling into the error of Sir Howard, or betraying the slightest mark of passion; he must bury his sentiments in the deepest folds of his heart. How delicate, how refined, he well knew must be the conduct of him who sought the affection of Rosilia.

But how acquire opportunities for the accomplishment of his wish? It was not by an occasional call, he could advance his interests; a thousand obstacles seemed to interpose themselves against him. Rosilia was never to be seen but in the presence of one or both of her parents, and he had no just pretensions by which he might offer himself a candidate for her hand: and not until a more confidential intimacy had arisen, by insinuating himself imperceptibly, could he allow himself to repose upon hopes, the bare thought of which filled his heart with tumults unutterable.

Thus plunged in the deepest meditation, Sir Howard burst suddenly upon him, holding in his hand a letter.

“ I am come,” said he, “ to say farewell ! I must depart immediately ; I have no time to lose ; my uncle is dead. This letter conveys the intelligence. It is written by my trusty friend, my uncle’s steward ; and unless I arrive in due time, it is supposed the executors will proceed in examining the will without me, and I have every right to expect I am nominated sole heir to all his property. The journey is a long one, but I must go ; so farewell ! I shall write to you from Northumberland, and inform you of the result. In the meantime visit the De Brookes for me ; perhaps you will see them but once, ere they quit London for their residence in Wales. You know, dear Melliphant, I rely upon your steady friendship. An affair of the heart cannot be entrusted in better hands than yours, because of all men living you are the least likely to become my rival,—ever laughing at and despising those who suffer themselves to be entangled in the snares of love. Farewell, my dear fellow !”

With breathless haste, Sir Howard next proceeded to the De Brookes, where he staid but a few minutes, merely to bid his compliments of adieu ; adding in obsequious accents, “ that if upon his return, he did not find them in London, he should avail himself of a former permission granted him by the General to pay them a visit towards autumn in their country

retirement;" so saying, he left them, less grieved in quitting London, the seat of every present pleasure and future hope and expectation, than he was delighted at the prospect of obtaining a sudden acquisition to his fortune.

Weary of London, the spring months having expired, General and Mrs. De Brooke had at length fully determined upon leaving it for the still and peaceful shades of the Bower, when their design was again interrupted by the unfortunate sudden illness of Mrs. De Brooke.

Perhaps nothing could have happened more consonant to the wishes of Melliphant; the prospect of carrying his views into execution relative to himself having entirely disappeared the moment their intended and unexpected departure had been announced to him in the farewell visit of Sir Howard. Now called upon in his professional capacity to administer relief to the suffering mother of Rosilia, he inwardly rejoiced that such a circumstance would afford a positive sanction to his visits; while in his outward appearance he manifested a deep sense of the unhappiness it caused to Rosilia and her father.

Under the plausible excuse of paying unremitting attention to the case of the invalid, once or twice each day Melliphant was allowed the gratification, not only of seeing, but of conversing with the lovely Rosilia. Sometimes confined in the dark apartment, in watchful attendance at her mother's couch, he beheld her; and sometimes, when he visited that

chamber of sickness, Rosilia, waiting in an ante-room, dreading, yet anxious to hear his opinions, no sooner heard his footsteps, than with precipitation she advanced to make her inquiries.

It was to Rosilia Melliphant gave the regulations necessary to be observed concerning regimen and prescriptions; when, upon such occasions, the absence of the General seldom failed to afford him a *tête-à-tête* with his daughter. Melliphant lost not those fortunate moments, as he considered them, to use every artifice he could suggest of rendering himself agreeable, and of showing himself in the fairest light.

By frequent experience, he had learned that, by a strict conformity with social converse, temperance of manner and well-supported logic, he could win upon the esteem of the unsuspecting and confiding. Humble, therefore, in his deportment, specious and insinuating in his address, he ever bore to Rosilia the semblance of one possessed of the strictest virtue. Learned without the parade of being so, by the perfect suavity of his manner he seemed ever more ready to receive information upon any subject, than capable of bestowing it; yet there were also times, when, from some urgent motive, his sentiments were delivered with clearness, force, and precision,—when, with true rhetorical skill, and with language the most persuasive, he could enter into the deepest intricacy of argument.

Sometimes, indeed, he could not altogether suc-

cessfully veil the perverted bias of his intellect; but, whenever he thus inadvertently wandered into scepticism, if by so doing he lost ground with his adversary, he could skilfully adopt the other side of the question, in a manner so as to allow sensibility of feeling and goodness of heart so much to preponderate over his discourse, that the transient cloud of sophistry was either wholly unnoticed, or passed away in the admiration excited by the brilliant flashes of his fancy! Possessed of a memory the most retentive, it was not difficult for him to draw from the vast stores of intelligence he had treasured.

But when alone, and there was no longer occasion to have recourse to his memory, his thoughts sprung wholly from the innate bent of his depraved affections. Thus gifted with speech, how powerfully might he impose upon and blind the judgment! Under every flowing word, graceful utterance, and melodious accent, what defilement lay concealed!

Often in the conversations he held with Rosilia,—such as were calculated to encourage her confidence and flatter her understanding,—he designedly, but with the nicest caution, sought to infuse the poison of his pernicious sentiments; but more so, when his aim had been directed towards impressing her susceptible mind with ideas of the benevolence of his temper, unprejudiced opinions, and enlarged comprehension:—“Let us be guided by our feelings—they alone should influence us—the consciousness of what will best promote our pleasures, and fill with the

greatest sense of enjoyment our narrow span of life.”

Language such as this he little imagined was addressed to one, who, contrary to his maxims, had already, though so young, in opposition to the feelings and inclinations of her heart, rigidly adhered to the dictates of reason and duty. Shielded by innocence, unsuspecting of ill, the words of Melliphant lost their force, and left not the impression he desired.

As far as frail human nature could admit, to act up to the highest degree of virtue had been, and ever was, the constant aim of Rosilia. No inferior motive whatever had power to change or deter her from following the sublime track she had traced. Melliphant, so apparently amiable, of so contemplative a turn, capable of such strong powers of resistance, of self-denial, she supposed might be influenced by the same sentiments.

His late observations, however, had betrayed that he had formed to himself some incorrect theories of right, although she was still willing to persuade herself that he had never deviated from its practice.

CHAPTER IV.

“ O cunning enemy, to catch a saint
 With saints dost bait thy hook! most dangerous
 Is that temptation that does goad us on
 To sin in loving virtue.”

SHAKSPEARE.

MRS. DE BROOKE, during her temporary suspensions from suffering, had frequently expressed to Rosilia her disapprobation of the long visits of Melliphant, and charged her in future to excuse herself from accompanying him to the drawing-room, and that, immediately upon receiving his instructions, she should hasten back to her apartment. This she had practised for several successive days, when Melliphant, harassed by the frequent disappointments he had endured, had the satisfaction at last of meeting her alone.

She had just returned from a short walk in those retired gardens, where she had been accustomed to ramble, free from intrusion. She had been urged by her mother to go there, under the apprehension that her health might suffer from a too great confinement to her sick room. When Melliphant first perceived her, he contemplated her for a time with

intense but silent admiration. That bloom which he had observed but recently to have slightly faded from her cheek, was again, from air and exercise, newly revived in all its glowing lustre. Nevertheless, his sense of pleasure vanished, and a sort of malign feeling, of jealousy or of envy, succeeded to it. No one, he thought, could behold her without emotion; and he was seized with the impassioned longing that no eye but his should ever revel over her charms.

Assuming his wonted self-command, and hoping to detain her, he entered upon such topics as he thought best adapted to his purpose. Rosilia, however, anxious to return to her mother, excused herself from any longer stay; and was on the point of quitting the apartment, when Melliphant, in a voice of the most touching rebuke, said "One moment, Miss De Brooke—will you have the goodness to spare me one moment of your time? I have something to say, which as it regards your mother, I was fearful of introducing too abruptly."

Rosilia instantly turned and resumed her seat: the air of inquietude accompanying the words of Melliphant, diffusing a tremulous agitation throughout her frame.

"I would not for the world, Miss De Brooke, alarm you," he continued, after a short pause, "and yet, as I have not often occasions allowed me of seeing the General, I feel it incumbent upon me, as a duty, to inform you that, as the malady of your mother is of an

infectious nature, you cannot any longer with safety to yourself frequent her apartment."

"But" said Rosilia, in accents denoting the extreme perturbation she felt, "do you apprehend danger?"

"Not at present, not immediately; it is precarious; a change might take place."

He witnessed her palpitating bosom, the lifeless hues and disconsolate expression of her interesting countenance; yet, from the machinations of his evil passions, he would have proceeded further, until, entirely overcome, he had seen her drop motionless in her chair, in order that he might have the luxury of supporting her within his arms, and of recalling her to a sense of life and being. The wily Serpent, however, that seemed to be ever near him to direct his thoughts, caused him instantly to perceive how indiscreet would be such conduct: for should Rosilia, from the fears he had instilled, fall into a swoon, and should she report it to her father, which, he conceived, she would not fail to do, it might be the means of a total prohibition to him of her future converse.

"I argue most favourably," he therefore quickly added, "from the excellent constitution of your mother; but as she will require the most vigilant care, a nurse has become indispensable. I can recommend one, whom I am well assured will give satisfaction; she is a kind, worthy creature, and strictly honest."

In respectful and conciliating tones, he then endeavoured to re-assure Rosilia, and to soothe her ap-

prehensions. Never did a lover, the most virtuous, awed in the presence of his mistress, express his feelings better, than did this accomplished dissembler: guarded in his least word or action, affecting the appearance of modesty and decorum, and fearing to betray himself, a stolen or half-averted glance at Rosilia was all he could allow himself,—for never could he openly encounter her beautiful eyes, emanating at once intelligence and the purest virtue.

Fearful that a longer stay might be deemed intrusive, he was on the point of going, and of leaving Rosilia to her solitary reflections, when the General entered, and begged him to be reseated; after which he made a slight recapitulation of the statement he had given Rosilia, urging the necessity of a nurse,—and of himself, as also his daughter, refraining from entering the apartment. He then manifested to the General a great desire that he would, in concurrence with his own opinion, consult that of some other physician; not that he imagined Mrs. De Brooke in danger, but because it would be doubtless a satisfaction to him; and not less on his own account, to feel assured that the most efficacious treatment had been resorted to.

“My dear Melliphant,” replied the General, gratified by such a display of liberality, “if you insist upon my so doing, I shall certainly comply; but for my own part, placing as I do a perfect confidence in your skill, I can see no occasion for the attendance of another. My wife, I am convinced, partakes of the same sentiment, and is satisfied you have done

all in your power to allay her sufferings, as well as to provide against the increase of her malady."

Highly flattered by this compliment paid to his abilities, Melliphant, with a very respectful bow, withdrew.

"A man of worth and talent," said the General to Rosilia; "we may esteem ourselves fortunate, in having made his timely acquaintance, seeing that he takes such a real interest in your mother's case."

"I fear," returned Rosilia, "my mother's illness has not yet arrived at its crisis; and I am now obliged, by conforming to Mr. Melliphant's advice, to give up my attendance upon her to another."

"I am aware, my dear child," replied the General, "of your tender solicitude on your mother's behalf: let us hope her illness will take a more favourable turn, and may be shorter than we at present are led to conceive. At all events, you must try and support yourself for my sake, having now become my only companion. It is to you, Rosilia, I look for present comfort; and it will be for you Rosilia, for your sake alone, in case emergency require it, I shall be inspired with fortitude; therefore do not let us forget that we have a mutual claim upon each other."

It was in similar language this kind parent ever addressed her; and from which Rosilia, from her deep filial regard for him, was then enabled to resist the attacks of sorrow.

The nurse recommended by Melliphant seemed,

as he had described her, watchful and attentive. Little, however, did Rosilia suspect she had been tutored to fulfil a double employment; that to promote the views of Melliphant, she had listened to his instructions, and had received his bribes. In acting, therefore, accordingly whenever a convenient moment offered, her theme was of Melliphant; she extolled his kindness, his goodness, and his amiable disposition—"no one in the world was equal to that excellent gentleman." She seemed in her encomiums to have spoken the very sentiments of her heart; and Rosilia felt she could not check her good-natured gossip, unless it were in the fear that even the low whispers in which she spoke might disturb her mother, to whose chamber, though Rosilia had been strictly prohibited from entering, she often occasionally stole—imagining no danger could arise, the room undergoing frequent fumigation by aromatic perfumes.

It is natural, thought Rosilia, this good woman should be given to chat; for what else could vary the sameness of her life? Love-stories ending in happy marriages, afforded her an ample topic; sensible and well-spoken for one in her situation of life, she would often descant upon those joys and felicities experienced by the married couple, when happily united; to which, Rosilia consenting, the wary nurse, seldom long absent from her point, would return to Melliphant.

"What a pity that one so good and kind should be unhappy in his mind."

“Unhappy!” returned Rosilia; “why do you think so? You mistake, doubtless, and imagine that the reflection and thoughtfulness to which he is subject proceeds from melancholy.”

“No, indeed, Miss, I do not think as you suppose; but I am convinced he labours under some severe secret affliction, which destroys his peace and makes him look so sad; I have seen him many a time, poor gentleman, sitting in such a musing posture, so mournful and sighing so deeply, it almost broke my heart to see him. Ah, Miss, pray don’t be angry with me, but you must know I can’t help it, upon my life, thinking—that it is love which makes him so unhappy, and that it is you he is so much in love with!”

This was accompanied by a look so sly, that Rosilia could not forbear smiling at the apparent innocent mistake, as she supposed, of the nurse, whom she hastened to underceive.

“I have no means,” said she, “of deciding whether or not Mr. Melliphant is affected as you say; but pray, my good nurse, be persuaded I am not the object!”

“Well, Miss, I can only say that I hope you will recollect my words, and depend upon it, ere long, you will find them verified. How glad I should be to see so good a young lady as you are, married to so kind-hearted, so worthy a gentleman—bless his soul, he’s the man to make a lady happy!”

Upon these remarks of the nurse, an inquiry as to

the truth of them was naturally suggested to the mind of Rosilia, and the whole conduct of Melliphant; since her first acquaintance with him, passed in rapid review before her. Neither in his manners, looks, nor air, could she trace anything like what she supposed might have been the case, had he been influenced by attachment towards her. As a character, gifted with superior understanding and worth, she might esteem him, and expect a similiar return; but to find a lover in Melliphant, the sedate, sober Melliphant, she had never dreamt of; and which she sincerely hoped might never be, firmly impressed with the idea that her soul was not formed to assimilate with his in the closer links of affection.

With the punctuality due to Melliphant's hire of her services, the nurse never failed to make reports to him respecting the issue of every fresh conversation she had held with Rosilia; who, entirely unsuspecting of such a deep-laid stratagem, and little weighing the force or construction that might be attached to her words, delivered her sentiments with that freedom she thought best calculated to please the friendly nurse,—coinciding only, however, in the opinion she entertained of the general worth of Melliphant; and which remarks, though given with exaggeration by the nurse, if they did not tend to raise the hopes of Melliphant, certainly did not tend to lessen them.

“ Holding so favourable a place in her good opinion,” thought he, “ it is but to advance myself a step higher ;

the force of an approving judgment in its operations upon her affections, may in the end persuade her to love me.”

The illness of Mrs. De Brooke, however, beginning to abate of its malignancy, he saw, with mortification, would not only soon render useless to her the continuance of a nurse, but that his visits as medical attendant would necessarily become less frequent. But why suffer himself to be disconcerted? had he not gathered two very enviable privileges—that of a nearer intimacy with Rosilia, and that of perpetuating his claims to the future notice of her parents? His indefatigable care of his patient, his approved skill, had given so much satisfaction, that he had hitherto not only met with every testimony of regard, but with every assurance of a continuation of friendship,—points surely of no trival moment.

The return of Sir Howard from Northumberland was that, however, which he dwelt upon with the greatest uneasiness. Should he attain the acquisition of a considerable addition to his fortune, as was to be expected, from his uncle's demise, he would, doubtless, become to him the most formidable of rivals. The ambition of the parents to form what they might conceive an eligible match for their daughter, uniting title and fortune, might influence Rosilia, though possessing no share in her heart, to bestow her hand upon Sir Howard. This idea, as forcibly presented to him, seemed the most likely of any to prove inimical to his plans.

Deeply ruminating upon the possibility of such an event, to what new expedient could he resort, whereby to defeat Sir Howard, and further promote, as well as assure to himself those advantages he had already, by his persevering industry, acquired? Fruitful as he was in resources, it was not long ere new projects were suggested upon the subject, which, as they became more maturely weighed and digested, needed but to be carried into execution.

In the adjoining house to Melliphant's lived a widow lady, who, though past the meridian of life, retained that fondness for those dissipated pleasures which a tolerable share of beauty, and some gaiety of manner, had rendered so fascinating during the period of her youth; when, fond of admiration, she drank in with avidity the flatteries of those who hovered around her for no other purpose than to indulge in the zest of the moment. Light-minded and frivolous, as her beauty faded she was still, from the possession of a handsome income, in some degree enabled to attract that homage she so much prized. Her company continued to be courted by the worldly votaries of either sex; but whether it was for herself alone, or for the agreeable entertainments she gave, the question never found admittance to her thoughts.

Melliphant was one whom she had found the best neighbour in the world; he was at all times ready to make himself useful, going to her at all hours, and joining her *petits soupers*. A more than common

intimacy had given rise to the gossip of the neighbourhood, supposing that Melliphant was courting the widow's hand for the sake of her fortune ; but, as the affair never came to a conclusion, such reports at last degenerated into those of scandal. In truth, marriage was not the object or the wishes of either.

Though others, like Melliphant, were admitted to the favourable estimation of Mrs. Belmour, yet, having the staff in her own hand, she was fearful of transmitting it to another, who might feel inclined to limit her indulgences. She had been so long familiarized to Melliphant, that his attentions, once flattering, became received as a due. Of a confined comprehension, she had never penetrated into the deep hypocrisy of his character, having no conception how well he could wear the mask, and thus appear what in reality he was not ; accustomed to his society, she felt a regard for him which induced her willingly to perform any act which might be likely to render him a service.

Having thrown himself upon a sofa in her apartment, in a fit of profound musing, during which Mrs. Belmour had accosted him without receiving a reply, she expostulated with him :

“ Why, really, Melliphant,” said she, “ you become intolerable ; you are more and more abstracted every day.”

His head still rested upon his hand, and he made no effort to speak. Rising, she approached him, when, starting from his seat, a bursting sigh escaped

him as he made towards the door. Curiosity or compassion determined Mrs. Belmour to prevent his going, until she had obtained from him a disclosure as to the cause which thus so strangely affected him.

“Nay,” exclaimed she, springing forward and laying her hand on the lock of the door, “I assume the privilege of old acquaintanceship, and you must positively not go until you have told me what it is that thus afflicts you, or promise to do so at another time.”

Suffering himself to be led back, he placed himself beside her, and, without further ceremony, revealed in the clearest and fullest manner, the state in which he was placed respecting the ardent passion consuming him, the secret advances he had already made, and the continual fears tormenting him of meeting with a failure in consequence of Sir Howard’s advances.

“Sir Howard!” interrupted Mrs. Belmour, “can it be possible that Sir Howard is paying his addresses elsewhere, and to another? Having nearly pledged himself—to me”, she was about saying, but checked herself;—whilst her whole countenance reddened, and displayed the strongest expression of jealousy.

Melliphant inwardly rejoiced that his plan had so far succeeded.

“It is, my dear Mrs. Belmour,” said he, affecting total ignorance as to her obvious displeasure against Sir Howard, “to solicit your kind interference effectually to oppose the views of Sir Howard, that I am

now led to intrude the disclosure of my rivalship in this affair upon your attention."

"Most willingly will I lend you my assistance to defeat him," said she, with asperity; "but how, how can my interference prove of efficacy in promoting your wishes?"

"By the most simple and easy means—that of first becoming acquainted with the parents of his flame, General De Brooke and his lady; an introduction will not be difficult to bring about; and they will form a most eligible acquisition to your delightful parties!"

Flattered by the compliment, and emulous of the novelty arising from an extension of the circle she visited, Mrs. Belmour expressed herself desirous of coinciding as soon as possible with the arrangement.

"But," said she, with some hesitation, "you have not told me how far Sir Howard is a favoured rival."

"Not with the daughter, in the least degree," returned he, "as I before said; my fears rest wholly with regard to how far she may allow herself to be influenced by her parents. Having in myself no pretensions to come openly forward, as also, the want of opportunity for insinuating myself, are the causes, my dear Mrs. Belmour, which urge me to rely upon your friendship. At the same time, I would hint, that in all our proceedings the greatest caution and circumspection must be observed; and that every means employed should be in entire subserviency and conformity with the character and temper of her to-

wards whom our views are directed. Rosilia De Brooke unites the most opposite qualities; she is retired, even to diffidence, but, at the same time, possesses the warmest candour; she has the most overflowing sensibility I ever witnessed; yet, in point of virtue, she has the greatest self-possession, and the most perfect dignity of mind,—strength and energy of thought and action; of conduct, an unsuspecting innocence, with an understanding cultivated to the last degree; refined and chaste, as manifested in every expression of her countenance, and in every word that falls from her lips.”

“ Her person,” said Mrs. Belmour; “ you say nothing of her person.”

“ Of that you will be the best judge when you see her,” replied he, starting from his seat, flashes of crimson rising to his cheek.

Mrs. Belmour regarded his gestures as he walked to and fro the apartment; at length, breaking silence, promised her steady adherence to the course he prescribed, and remarked, that perseverance had conquered many difficulties, and had ultimately brought the most obdurate fair ones to bow submissive and voluntary captives at Cupid’s shrine.

CHAPTER V.

“ Plutus appear’d, and said, ’Tis true,
 In marriage, gold is all their view ;
 They seek no beauty, wit, or sense ;
 And love is seldom the pretence.
 All offer incense at my shrine,
 And I alone the bargain sign.
 Doris was rich enough, ’tis true ;
 Her lord must give her title too :
 And ev’ry man, or rich or poor,
 A fortune asks, and asks no more.”

GAY.

IMMEDIATELY on returning home, highly satisfied with the result of his visit to Mrs. Belmour, Melliphant found on his table a letter from Sir Howard, over which he cast his eyes with precipitation. The first lines breathed bitter invective against his deceased uncle, for having disappointed his hopes. He next expatiated upon the money spent at various times, under the firm conviction of having it handsomely returned to him on the death of his uncle. He cursed the journey he had been led to take after what had proved but an *ignis fatuus*, deluded as he had been by false expectations ; ending his epistle by saying, “ that his uncle having doubtless lent his ear to some old woman’s tales and backbiting, he did not choose to place his property in the hands of a spendthrift,

supposing he acted more wisely in cutting me off. Poor old dotard!—had he thought more judiciously, he would have left me his fortune, as the best means of effecting my reformation; for how could I have done better than have shared it with the lovely Rosilia? Yes! in truth, no longer would I have hesitated, had my uncle's fortune fallen to my lot: the lovely Rosilia should have been made instantly my bride! whose looks, so sweetly demure, might have at last chased the devil from mine!”

“Rosilia never will be his!” silently ejaculated Melliphant, as with a malicious smile he cast aside the letter, and prepared to make his accustomed daily visit to his patient.

When, in the course of time, Mrs. De Brooke became sufficiently recovered, no longer to complain of that lassitude, the usual effects of a long and serious illness, she would readily have acceded to the wishes of the General, and would again have encountered the journey through Wales to their tranquil Bower. But when, in the severity of the weather, she perceived a premature winter, and when she recollected how chill and cheerless had passed away those months, the bleak winds howling around their lonely dwelling,—and should the complaint she had recently recovered from menace a relapse; in giving due weight to such considerations, the General and herself mutually agreed, it being then the latter end of autumn, to postpone their journey until the ensuing spring; swayed also in their determination

from tenderness to Rosilia, to whom the unvarying sameness of the country during winter could not but prove irksome.

How differently would they have acted could they have dived into those hearts where iniquity and deceit lay hidden as in a recess, keeping watch for the fruition of their long-meditated and cunningly-devised projects!

Presenting himself, after his arrival from Northumberland, before the De Brookes, Sir Howard was careful not to discover in his manners any appearance of that mortification he had felt on account of his late disappointment; even more facetious and gay than customary, he paid the most flattering attentions to Mrs. De Brooke, and gave to Rosilia the homage of his admiration! Previous to taking his leave, he said he had many visits to pay, and, amongst many other names, mentioned that of Mrs. Belmour, with whom, he added, his acquaintance was of long standing.

“She is,” said he, “a next-door neighbour of my friend Melliphant, who it appears has sometimes spoken to her of General and Mrs. De Brooke, and from which, much desiring an introduction, she has begged of me to afford it to her. Fearing that you might not approve,” addressing himself to Mrs. De Brooke, “I could not altogether acquiesce with her wishes until I had apprized you of them. She is a woman of fortune,” laying emphasis on the word fortune, as if to enforce the recommendation it gave

her, "and as such frequents the best circles. She is one who improves upon acquaintance, rendering herself as agreeable in small parties, termed family ones, as in large entertainments and crowded rooms."

Mrs. De Brooke replied, that she could have no objection to form the acquaintance of Mrs. Belmour, since it appeared she was so unceremonious and so conformable to the taste of her friends, in respect to her mode of visiting them.

Sir Howard having taken for that evening a box at the theatre, and having some tickets to dispose of, in presenting them to Mrs. De Brooke, begged of her to do him the honour of accepting them; which, as she did not refuse, he added, that if she consented, he would go immediately and engage Mrs. Belmour to be of the party. Thus, as this desired introduction had been planned between Mrs. Belmour and Melliphant, it took place through the medium of Sir Howard: strange as it may appear, the latter was made the instrument of effecting a plan concerted against himself.

Previous to meeting Rosilia in Kensington Gardens, and of becoming known to her parents in Portland Place, Sir Howard Sinclair, from his love of wealth alone, had been induced to pay serious attention to Mrs. Belmour; who, flattered at the idea of espousing one younger than herself, and of adding a title to her fortune, if she was not desirous of relinquishing her liberty, yet had by no means made up her mind to reject a suitor so worthy of her am-

bition. But when she heard from Melliphant that another engaged that homage which had been before paid to herself, she resolved to be revenged for his inconstancy, by acting in a manner which should decidedly favour the views of his rival; and if, upon finding his hopes with regard to Rosilia frustrated, she should be so fortunate as once again to bring him to renew his addresses to herself, how great would be her triumph in then giving him his final dismissal.

Thus acting, in concurrence with the desire of Melliphant (who, the more to favour his designs, determined to act an apparently neutral part), Mrs. Belmour, with pointed accents, watching the effect of her words, spoke to Sir Howard of the De Brookes, telling him, that when an occasion offered, she much desired an introduction to them; hesitating and stammering, he would have excused himself in a thousand ways, being wholly unprepared for a demand which, if complied with, would place him, as he conceived, in so awkward a situation. Mrs. Belmour, however, strenuously renewing her request, fearing to give rise to suspicion, he made a virtue of necessity, and promised obedience to her wishes.

“What do you think has happened to me?” said Sir Howard, upon seeing Melliphant; “Mrs. Belmour is desirous of being introduced to the De Brookes, and of all persons in the world she has fixed upon me to bring it about. I have promised compliance, but shall evade doing so, if possible.”

“ You know but little of the female heart,” said Melliphant drily, “ if you think, by opposing Mrs. Belmour in her wish, that you thereby advance your interest either with her or with Rosilia ! One or other of those objects, or even both you would obtain,” added he, with a sarcastic smile. “ The means of possessing a legitimate right to the fortune of Mrs. Belmour is, you will allow, by marriage only ; and the means of possessing a return of love from Rosilia, again, may seem as if by marriage only ; but as our laws do not admit the privilege of two wives, you must e’en make your choice ; I see no alternative. If you make up your mind to the widow and her fortune (certainly ample enough to purchase pleasures of every sort), the fear of losing the acquisition of your title, through the medium of jealousy, infused from your attentions to Rosilia, may lead her to take a more open part, and no longer tamper with you as she has hitherto done. And, on the contrary, if as a last effort, you would wish to put to the trial how far you have succeeded in winning over to yourself the affections of the other, your court paid to her rival, in her presence, will instantly convince you. She who makes every feeling visible by the successive variations of her countenance, fluttered aspect, and involuntary blush, will afford you intimations which you cannot for an instant mistake. Thus, receive it as my friendly advice, no longer dangle after each ; accept the one, and renounce the other. Bring them together ! and let the circumstances as I have described fix your choice, and

determine you at once to either party. If you thus continue wavering, you will lose both; for, as says the old adage, ‘He who sits between two stools falls to the ground.’”

Ever ready to submit his judgment to that of Melliphant, ensnared by his specious reasoning, and becoming the complete dupe of his artifices, Sir Howard no longer hesitated as to the step he should adopt, and went immediately, as we have seen, to call upon the De Brookes, in order to promote the introduction in question.

Always happy of an excuse for not attending public amusements, the General, pleading a prior engagement with Dr. Lovesworth, gladly submitted his wife and daughter to the care of his supposed friend, Sir Howard, when he called in the evening to conduct them to the play.

Upon entering the box of the theatre, taken in his name, and finding Mrs. Belmour and Melliphant already there, the introduction of the ladies took place.

Mrs. Belmour seemed turned of forty; to an air somewhat matronly, she added a kind and gracious deportment. If not of brilliant parts, her great knowledge of life, and habits of company supplied the deficiency; with these acquirements, possessing some share of tolerable plain sense, she certainly had the art of rendering herself agreeable.

The scenes exhibited that evening were more correct and moral than is usual to the modern drama.

Interested alone at those parts which held up virtue to her view, allusions or *double entendres* passed upon the ear of Rosilia unheard, or without point. The remarks of Sir Howard, during the whole of the performance, were entirely directed towards Mrs. De Brooke and the widow; whilst the artful Melliphant engaged Rosilia—mild, humble, sensible, in all he said or looked, who could have supposed his heart harboured such deceit within!

The play being over, Sir Howard, who had not yet spoken to Rosilia, observed that her bouquet, which was but a short time before so fresh and humid, began to show symptoms of decline.

“And thus,” added Melliphant, “love and beauty are imaged by that myrtle and rose, alike perishable!”

“The reason,” observed Sir Howard, “they ought to be gathered; since no sooner are they ripe, than they fall to decay. Is it not better, then, they should perish there on a bed so soft, rather than scatter their perfumes to the wind.”

Rosilia was so much accustomed to the language of flattery from Sir Howard, that his remarks of this nature were seldom attended to by her; were it otherwise, however, the subtle inuendos his words on some occasions conveyed, were lost on her like blunted arrows; they left no impression on her mind, nor sullied the purity of her thoughts.

The concluding observation of Sir Howard catching her ear, she divested herself of her faded nose-

gay, and was about consigning it to the ground, when Sir Howard, with his usual gallantry of gesture, begged of her the boon; dreading the request might be granted him, Melliphant, trembling with agitation, involuntarily stepped forward and demanded the same favour; in anxious expectation, contending for the prize, the hands of each were outstretched.

Melliphant was the victor! Emotion ran through his brain; he bowed lowly, expressive of the grateful sense he entertained for the gift conferred upon him; and in the secret gladness of his soul it was deposited in his bosom.

Mrs. Belmour offered to convey Mrs. De Brooke and her daughter home in her own carriage; and previous to taking her leave, requested the pleasure of seeing them at a small party she purposed giving shortly, in which they acquiesced; and she was soon after set down at her own house.

Melliphant stepped in almost immediately upon her entrance, and she invited him to sup with her. The conversation turned naturally upon the De Brookes: Melliphant was unusually elated. The circumstance of the flowers he had received from the hands of Rosilia, in preference to Sir Howard, had forcibly impressed his imagination; transmitted to his bosom, from that seat where they had previously rested, he felt flattered and transported beyond measure. The first favour received at her hands! what encouragement for his future perseverance!

The subject was warmly discussed with Mrs. Bel-

mour. Exhilarated by her good fare and generous wine, he forgot the hour, and in the bliss he indulged, would have launched into the greatest and wildest rhapsodies, had not Mrs. Belmour been the first, without ceremony, to warn him that it was time to retire. She had given him credit as a man of eminent taste in his selection of Rosilia; and, as she anticipated in the event of his marriage, to find her a very desirable neighbour, she further resolved to take an active part in forwarding the measure. Of an intriguing spirit also, match-making was an occupation to give her pleasure.

But not to go into a detail of all the plans she adopted, suffice it to say that Mrs. Belmour was incessantly contriving meetings and opportunities for interviews between Melliphant and Rosilia; and, by many kindnesses shown on her part, continued to increase in the regard of Mrs. De Brooke; who, on account of her very circumscribed acquaintance, as also fondness for home, could not possibly hear of the many reports whispered to her discredit.

One or two evenings every week were regularly appropriated to meeting at each other's respective residences, Melliphant being always of the party, and not unfrequently Sir Howard,—who, since the evening of the play, and late observations resulting from Melliphant's advice, not finding that his assiduities to the widow had produced even the most distant manifestation of jealousy on the part of Rosilia, but that, on the contrary, her calm serenity of

demeanour existed unchanged, could only reluctantly infer that she remained invulnerable to his assaults.

But daring and intrepid as we have described him, it was not likely he would tamely submit to defeat. Governed by pride and vanity, such principles were not to be mortified with impunity. Revenge for slighted love! the bitter workings of revenge succeeded! and he resolved that nothing should hinder him from his purpose of effecting, if not the loss of virtue and innocence in Rosilia, the destruction of her peace for ever! He could not be any longer deceived as to the ascendancy obtained by the more fortunate Melliphant, whose conduct he had deeply scrutinised since the night of the marked preference shown him, in receiving the flowers which he had been himself the first to solicit; and he was convinced that, under an appearance of feigned indifference on the part of Melliphant, the strongest passion was concealed.

Could it be true, was it possible, that he, whom he had hitherto imagined to be acting in concert with himself, was, on his own account, aspiring to the affections of Rosilia,—he, whose affairs were so deeply involved, whose establishment was sinking, whose professional labours brought him so inadequate a supply? on the verge of ruin, could he, at such a crisis, entertain thoughts of marriage—of proposing himself for the partner of Rosilia? And how, or in what manner, had he planned his operations for the purpose of effecting such views?

Melliphant, by his contrivances, kept up so much outward appearance, that none but Sir Howard was acquainted with the real state of his finances. Even his neighbour, Mrs. Belmour, seemed in ignorance as to the truth, or otherwise her heart might have relented, and not have allowed her to co-operate with him in the villainous plot he had laid to hurry an unsuspecting and innocent victim into the gulph of want, penury, and wretchedness! to involve in the merited fate of the detestable Melliphant, the lovely and guileless Rosilia!

Light-minded and superficial, little did Mrs. Belmour give herself a moment's concern as to the real character of one whom she devoted herself so freely to serve. Insensible to misfortunes on his own account, Melliphant had no pity to bestow upon the misfortunes of others; entirely ruled and guided by his passions, instead of subjecting them to restraint; debased and vicious in principle, his constant endeavour was to make it appear that the Truths of Christianity were calculated alone to infuse terror into the prejudiced and unenlightened.

Notwithstanding, however, the utter derision with which he viewed the holy precepts of the Gospel, he was ever careful to dissemble with Rosilia in his real opinions, and conceal from her his apostacy from her creed; well aware that the most decided firmness of principle was singularly opposed in her to softness and flexibility. Bent, therefore, as he was on the subduing of her heart, it was one of his fixed reso-

lutions never to differ from her upon any of those points which, in the ardour and enthusiasm of her character, she was led to espouse.

By such means he flattered himself that in time he should subvert her fine understanding, and, by the contamination of her hitherto unsullied mind, reduce her to a level with himself,—and this he meditated to effect by slow and gradual operations, through the medium of her imagination, which he had discovered to be warm and excursive; and, when occasion offered, by artfully insinuating doubts, such as he conceived might puzzle even philosophy to refute.

Mistaken, however, was the systematic hypocrite! His fallacious reasonings might indeed, when supported by the powers of his energetic language and flowery gloss of style, assume an appearance of plausibility, and tend to impress the minds of his unworthy associates; but they would be found very inadequate to influence the mind of Rosilia, whose well-regulated life, whilst it constantly manifested her perfect love to the Deity, proved at once well fortified and impervious, a sufficient barrier to all the attacks of the sophist.

His utmost copiousness of ideas, his best arranged arguments, he would find but vainly exerted to overthrow that virtue which invested her with ingenuous modesty and grace. She looked down from the mountain of her holiness, upraised for her defence, uninjured by the attacks of infidelity; so pure and

elevated a principle of devotion was neither to be sullied nor shaken!

Innocence, it is true, may be seduced, and ignorance deceived, but chastity, founded on the firm basis of pure virtue, presents to the eye of the artful and ensnaring an indubitable evidence of impregnable security!

CHAPTER VI.

“The soul grows clotted by contagion,
 Imbodies and imbrutes, till she quite lose
 The divine property of her first being.”

MILTON.

MELLIPHANT had been for some time in the habit of administering to the intellectual pleasures of Rosilia, by supplying her with various books; and, as these were generally such as are esteemed for taste, elegant sentiment, and classic diction, she had received much pleasure in their perusal.

But when, no longer confining himself to these, Meliphant offered to her works addressed to the imagination merely, such as she was well persuaded, from the remarks she had gathered from those whose superior judgment she had deemed indisputable, whilst they pleased the fancy, could not convey the least moral instruction whatever, possessing rather a tendency to increase and enervate the natural sensibilities of the heart; she hesitated not to refuse them with so decided a negative, as mortified and confounded Melliphant.

“The Sorrows of Werter presents a master-piece in that species of literature.” exclaimed he. “I

thought, Miss De Brooke, by recommending it, as a pastime for your leisure hours, it would have afforded an agreeable variation to the usual course of your readings; I might be mistaken. I was impressed also with the desire of hearing your opinion respecting the work in general, but more particularly in reference to the character of Werter. Too true, for suffering humanity, are there painted feelings bearing a perfect imitation of nature. I would fain suppose otherwise, and that the sentiment consuming Werter was described in language of too deep colouring! Still, though I cannot doubt, from" experience, he meant to say, but his voice faltered; he still hesitated, and with apparent fear of having said too much, changed at once the subject.

"But whilst," continued he, "we sympathize with and pity Werter, we must, at the same time, bring ourselves to abjure his errors, his want of true courage, and that noble resistance of mind, which teaches us to endure misery and to submit to life, even though sinking under the pressure of the most overwhelming calamity."

The emphatic delivery of these last words was accompanied by a sigh the most profound, whilst he turned aside, as if to conceal the strong emotion which shook him.

A silence ensued, which, as Rosilia did not interrupt, he hoped he had, together with an allusion to his own case, said almost sufficient to controvert her former disinclination to read Werter; he, therefore,

again ventured, in the most persuasive terms, to express a wish that she would do so. Again, however, she declined, stating as a reason, that she had read some of the best novels, and did not wish to extend her knowledge of them.

That a pristine innocence was as a plant, of most delicate and fragile nature, and alike subject to wither and decay, was an impression that had been early imbibed and deeply engrafted on the mind of Rosilia. She, in consequence, felt an invincible dread of aught that could sully or in the least diminish the native purity of its lustre. The combating with her feelings, as indeed every action of Rosilia, proceeded from those high, sublime, and exalted ideas she entertained of virtue, entirely removed from all that was beneath the views and contemplations of a rational and immortal creature; to act up with firmness and decision to such divine precepts was ever the most devout and dearest wish of her heart.

The Sorrows of Werter, might or might not be an exception to that species of writing she had heard condemned; nevertheless, though she was endowed with a fancy replete in poetic imagery, she had no relish for works, that did not combine with taste, high moral instruction.

Melliphant sought to disguise the inward vexation he felt, and resolved not to be discouraged, trusting in some luckier moment he might overcome her scruples. Werter still remained his pocket companion.

We have said that Rosilia was in the habit of frequenting some pleasant gardens, at no great distance from her home. There she could range the winding walks, unseen of any; it was there she had always felt herself at liberty, free from intrusion. But even there that demon, seeking her destruction, found her! As an arch-fiend, full of guileful intent, unperceived he had traced her footsteps, and followed as she entered.

Why was it that in so large a city, abounding with innumerable delights of every kind, everything cloyed, all was insipid, and nothing pleased? How came it to pass that nothing possessed a charm that could, for one moment, abstract his attention from Rosilia; divert him from those cruel, persevering endeavours to tear from its parent stem that flower, at once displaying to the view, truth, innocence, and beauty? Animated alone by the perfidious love that led him to destroy the sole motive of his pursuit. And when gathered, what might its fragrance avail him? Alas! nought; robbed of its lustre, with inhuman barbarity to be cast adrift! For desolate and forsaken on the wide face of the earth is she whose mind has yielded to the attacks of sophistry in its systematic seduction. It is not the marriage tie, neither is it rank nor affluence that can wash away the stain, and restore lost virtue and innocence!

Could nothing induce Melliphant to desist from his infernal purpose? No! there is that in the human

heart which, when unregulated, strengthens by opposition, and the greater the difficulties that accumulate, the greater is its ardour to overcome them.

Melliphant contrived to join Rosilia as if by accident, hastening round to a turning in one of the alleys just in time to present himself before her, well knowing that by such means she would be prevented from avoiding him. He held in his hand Werter—the leaves were open as if he had been newly reading it. The insinuations of Melliphant during their last interview, however slightly and delicately conveyed, had not escaped Rosilia, as bearing some allusion to the impression the nurse had previously endeavoured to make on her mind, when she said, “Well, miss, however you are now inclined to disbelieve my words, ere long you will find them verified.”

Wishing to throw a check upon any further advance in Melliphant, yet struck with the idea that it might give a too great importance to his sentiments, did she manifest a desire to shun him, she bent her steps in a direction leading, by a circuit round the garden, to the door whence she purposed returning home. Melliphant walked by her side in silence.

“I have been amusing myself,” said he at length, “with looking over Werter, for the purpose of examining strictly whether any of its parts produce aught in reality of a nature sufficiently censurable, to throw a general opprobrium upon the whole; instead of which, the more I examine, I find how infinitely the author has excelled in sentiment and de-

scription ; it is really a beautiful production of human genius. How unfortunate I am not to have prevailed on you to read it."

The earnestness with which he spoke upon a subject which, as he would have her believe, no otherwise concerned him than merely to contribute to her amusement, created an involuntary smile, which he perceived playing upon her countenance, and mistook it for a sign of acquiescence ; then seizing the occasion with a gentle, yet respectful familiarity, he sought to thrust the book into her hand. Swayed however by that decision which ever upheld her, never to vary from a point once taken and approved of by her reason and judgment, she again rejected the proffered work. Absolute pride and contradiction, thought he, looking downwards, abashed and confused ; or can she suspect me of design !

To relieve the pain he seemed evidently labouring under, Rosilia addressed him.

"I do not wish, Mr. Melliphant," said she, "to indulge in a sickly sensibility for fictitious woes, life abounding with so many real ones ; such works which give vigour and fortitude to the mind I should prefer, the lessons they teach us of rising superior to misfortune being always useful."

Trembling under the apprehension that she might have suspected his intentions, and that he might lose in her favourable and flattering estimation,—after, by a subtle device to rescue himself from her ill opinion, he recommended Homer's Iliad.

“I conceived you possessed a mind,” added he, so perfectly formed, so free from prejudice, that whilst you passed over the defective parts of Werter, you would have relished to an eminent degree the beauty, harmony, and exaltation of its sentiments.”

He paused, and then in lower accents still more tremulous, denoting the increased pulsation of his frame, “If you were placed in a relative situation to me—forgive the expression I am about using—I would insist! yes, I would insist upon your reading it, in order to redeem myself in your opinion, and restore, I fear, my lost credit. I would not for worlds have recommended what I thought improper for you to read.”

Melliphant, as he ventured to turn a glance towards Rosilia, perceived “she looked unutterable things”—an expression of countenance almost indefinable, even to so penetrating an observer. Interpreting them however to his advantage, in the successive changes of her looks he thought he perceived indications of compassion and forgiveness with a predominating fear of having given offence.

That the worthy and amiable Melliphant harboured a secret partiality for her, his recent words and manner might have fully betrayed; but not wishing to encourage his passion, it was her duty to check it; and even in so doing how embarrassing was her situation! how appear to understand what was not openly declared,—given but by insinuations only!

Wishing, however, to evade a continuation of the

subject and to relieve the emotions of Melliphant, she said, "I will read the book at some future time : not that I have the least cause to fear it would be productive of any injurious consequences should I read it even at the present, my mind, as you would assure me," added she playfully, "being so perfectly strong ; and I willingly flatter myself into the belief that it is so."

Every persuasion of Melliphant was accompanied with such humility of expression and of mien, that though nothing was more foreign from the intention of Rosilia than to throw any appearance of consent upon his attachment, yet wilfully to disoblige and distress him she could not, without in some degree sharing in the same feeling.

Conversing upon other topics they pursued their walk until Rosilia reached home ; when Melliphant, inwardly delighted that he had partly avowed his sentiments without having apparently forfeited her confidence, respectfully bowed and left her.

Obliged as he felt himself to desist from any longer pressing Werter upon her attention, as soon as he entered his chamber he took it from his pocket and replaced it by the "Man of Feeling". Surely, thought he, the most fastidious critic cannot object to this ! The utmost Platonic nicety could find nothing in it to reprehend ! Why then, it may be asked, was he desirous for her to read it, his object being to awaken images to her fancy such as might imperceptibly sully the native purity of her heart ?

The answer is, that as every the least of his actions towards Rosilia, involved design,—well aware that few could read that work without being deeply interested in the character of its hero, and of deeply sympathising in that over-reserve which led him to conceal so delicate and deep rooted an attachment.

That he also, like the Man of Feeling, nourished within him, the canker of his own destruction, a hopeless passion equally preying upon his vitals, and which might equally, as with Harley, terminate his existence. He had wished also to have insinuated that in Werter there were traits of character bearing no small resemblance to his own.

Trusting to be more successful in introducing the “Man of Feeling” to her notice, for three successive days it was carried about him, waiting to seize an occasion for presenting the volume. With the most placid demeanour Rosilia listened to the arguments advanced in its praise; her resolution being taken, she determined not to waver: she refused it as she former. It might be, as he said, unexceptionable; but she was careful how she permitted herself to accept any favour at his hands. She feared giving encouragement to him, particularly as she began to suspect his views in thus acting might arise from the hopes he entertained of exciting a return of sentiment: weighing the circumstance in accordance with her inward feelings, she readily acknowledged she

might regard Melliphant as a friend, but as a lover never!

With the greatest circumspection therefore she became as industrious to shun every occasion that might lead him to a further declaration of attachment, as he, on the other hand, was in seeking for it.

He left her under the impression that she was invincible; he cursed her prudery, as he called it, and that invariable self-possession of virtue that enthroned her, so effectually shielding her from his designs; that barrier, which he had been so long aiming to remove. Were there no inlets by which he could enter, take her off her guard, and at once disarm her?

“Had she been less difficult to subdue,” ejaculated he, in all the fury of disappointed hope, “my passion would have been less violent! ’Tis by this tormenting resistance to my every effort that she haunts me as she does, by night and by day.”

General De Brooke being anxious to return to the peaceful scenes of Glamorgan, his return thither having been so frequently deferred, to give himself a foretaste of the pleasure he should experience when the spring months arrived, he resolved to accompany Dr. Lovesworth in an excursion he intended to his Hermitage. The Bower moreover required some new arrangements previous to the return of his family to that delightful spot.

Perhaps no event could have happened more op-

portunately to favour the proceedings of those whom the unsuspecting and all-confiding General admitted so freely to his house, and whom he believed were strenuously and warmly attached to his family interests. As to Sir Howard he had nearly dropped his visits, and when he came it was but to pass a few ceremonious compliments, and he was off again. It never occurring to the General or Mrs. De Brooke how much his pride and vanity had been wounded; they were inclined to suppose he felt piqued that his attentions to Rosilia had not met with a more favourable return. Having with pleasure beheld the effects of her attractions over his heart, seeing in him no very flagrant errors to condemn, they had flattered themselves with one day greeting her under the title of Lady Sinclair.

“Vainly in the belles of the present day,” said Sir Howard once in confidential discourse with the General, “vainly may we look for such a mind; if I could make myself agreeable to your lovely and amiable daughter, and had a fortune of sixty thousand pounds I would lay it at her feet.”

Conceiving this eulogy, so unequivocal and flattering to his child, was preparatory only to his more decided proposals, the General on his part unwilling to reject them, had given full encouragement to his visits; while to the designs of Melliphant, so deeply concerted and so gradual in their operation, he remained as well as Mrs. De Brooke effectually blinded.

CHAPTER VII.

“Hyena’s smiles he wears, and in his breast
No trace of candour’s found.”

WISHING to reap every advantage in his power from the absence of the General, Melliphant solicited the indulgence of entertaining Mrs. De Brooke and her daughter, in company with Mrs. Belmour, at his own house. The request was so urgently made, and was so well seconded by Mrs. Belmour, that Mrs. De Brooke thought it would appear ungenerous in her to refuse. They accordingly met together upon the evening appointed.

The apartments of Mr. Melliphant were large and handsome ; previously however to receiving his guests in the room destined for that purpose, he made some alterations, which, with the help also of a few hired articles of some expense and beauty, gave an appearance of taste and elegance, calculated to impose and excite attention. Were Rosilia the presiding goddess here, thought he, the charm would be complete. If by some happy association in finding herself called upon to lend her assistance at the tea-equipage, such an idea could gain but a temporary admittance to her

thoughts; and again a second time with greater force, by becoming at last familiar to it, success might still be his.

Alas! to what an infatuation,—to what an illusion did he yield himself! Would it be possible to discover a more unprincipled dissembler, seeking but the consummation of his selfish views. To bind himself in the bonds of matrimony and the day after what might he expect but to be arrested for debts he had no means of discharging, and by an execution in his house to be deprived of every, the least article of furniture then decorating his spacious and well-arranged apartments. What an opposition is there in the sentiments and feelings of a man like Melliphant to those who in religiously regarding marriage, make the happiness of the beloved object the primary desire of the soul.

Nevertheless, the elated Melliphant, upon bestowing welcome upon his guests, rejoiced at beholding a smile of satisfaction illumine the eloquent countenance of her against whom his arts were directed. On a pier table lay an assortment of valuable prints. An Indian cabinet, consisting of a small but choice collection of petrefactions and fossils, was placed in a recess at the bottom of the room; a few paintings and portraits from the pencil of the most eminent artists adorned the walls. With the nicest care, Melliphant had combined for the entertainment of Rosilia, both in art and science, what he was well

aware would best assimilate with her taste, and afford her, what in her estimation surpassed every other enjoyment,—the intellectual and the pleasing.

Having minutely examined every painting, and admired the respective beauties of each, so nicely delineated, and pointed out to her observation by Melliphant, he placed a chair for her at the table of prints, leaving her there, to indulge in all the luxury of her taste, whilst he resumed conversation with Mrs. De Brooke. He had purposely laid upon the table, Rousseau's "*Nouvelle Heloise*;" she might be led to open it; it was in French, and glowing in all the brilliancy of original description, he had conceived it could not fail to captivate her.

He sat from her apart, at some distance; but though supporting an animated discourse, the most trifling gesture of Rosilia escaped not his attention. Having been fully gratified by an inspection of the prints, she laid her hand upon "*Heloise*;" she removed it from its place; she opened it. The words in the title-page, "The woman who reads this is lost!" Melliphant had taken care to obliterate. As an insidious foe, ruminating upon his dark intent, his eye at times deeply fixed upon her from under his lowering brow.

She continued reading; and the features of Melliphant, as he threw himself back in his chair, with folded arms, relaxed into that smile which seemed to proceed from some cruel joy,—some malicious hope,—

that external fiend-like expression bearing certain indications of evil within, and which a wise Providence has designed to forewarn the innocent.

But as the serpent often unperceived aims its forked dart, so Melliphant lurking as it were in ambush, the deadly venom of his intentions was still concealed from the sight.

Lovely was the pure intellectual ray emanating from the countenance of Rosilia, as she turned over the leaves of the book, occasionally pausing to read some glowing passage that met her eye ; but in none of which did she find aught that might be termed exceptionable, or calculated to injure the most susceptible delicacy. With the desire to know the author, she turned to the first page.

“ Rousseau !” involuntarily exclaimed she aloud, which drew upon her the attention of Mrs. Belmour, who received the work from her hand ; “ If you have never read it,” said she, “ let me advise you to lose no time in doing so ; what pleasure it will give you ! so much sentiment, it cannot fail to delight you.”

“ I must confess,” returned Rosilia, “ my mind is so accessible to prejudice, that probably with me the author’s name may be a sufficient inducement to conclude I should but lose my time in its perusal. Or, were I led to do so, I should think I gave to amusement only that time which might be much more usefully spent. The recommendations you give it, are certainly very enticing, but I trust such may equally

be given to works more generally approved of,—“Paul and Virginia,” for instance; surely, that charming and affecting story combines sentiment with imagination; the most natural and virtuous feelings of the heart, with the most lively and brilliant colouring; ’tis truly delightful! Others I could mention, to say nothing of Akenside or Thompson. Oh! such authors have been most happy in their descriptions of nature throughout the whole of their respective tales and poems.”

“So warm, so sensitive, so energetic,” thought Melliphant, as he marked the fervent and animated expression and hue accompanying her words, “could she be prevailed upon to read Rousseau, my work is accomplished!”

He stole gently round to the back of Mrs. Belmour’s chair, and half inclining forward, whispered something audible to her ear alone; then resuming his seat near Mrs. De Brooke, seemed engaged but in discourse with her.

“Let me assure you, my dear Miss De Brooke,” said Mrs. Belmour, after a due pause, “that if any censure has been attached to the works of Rousseau, it has found its existence but in prejudice,—absolute prejudice! a narrow-mindedness to which indeed you should be above listening, or allowing to prevail with you. You should read all works, and decide for yourself. But,” continued she, smiling, whilst assuming an air and tone of soft persuasion, “I know a reason that might doubly recommend that work to

you, that might render it doubly more interesting, and of which you are at present but little aware."

The curiosity of Rosilia being thus raised, she listened anxiously attentive to what was to follow.

"It is," added Mrs. Belmour, "that you will find in Julia a second self. Had you lived in the time of Rousseau, and had he known you, one might have conceived he had taken you for his model: thence you may learn how inimitably he has copied nature, in the charming character he has painted."

A lively blush suffused the cheek of Rosilia, at the compliment she supposed Mrs. Belmour intended to pay her, who was earnestly awaiting a reply.

"I cannot," she said, "attempt to refute you, Mrs. Belmour, because I have no doubt your ideas are the ideas of many; but, as it is by the generally received opinions I wish to be guided, I feel no inclination to become an admirer of Rousseau."

She would have said more, but she feared she had already piqued her adversary, and wished, therefore, to change the subject; at the same time, a sudden recollection flashed across her mind of what she had once heard fall from the lips of her esteemed friend, Dr. Lovesworth. "That Rousseau refined upon sensuality, and that no virtuous woman should read him, whether married or single, because he painted scenes and images pernicious in their effects, having a tendency to injure chastity, blight modesty, and destroy innocence, which in the married as in the single state, ought to be alike tenaciously preserved."

Melliphant had attentively listened to the conversation which had passed between his coadjutor, Mrs. Belmour, and Rosilia, notwithstanding he had been endeavouring to divert the attention of Mrs. De Brooke by an exhibition of the contents of his Indian cabinet; and emotion flushed his face, rage flashed from his eyes! upon finding himself again defeated. The tea, however, intervened, and, master of himself, he did the honours, assisted by Rosilia, with perfect decorum. Conversation decreasing, he next, for the amusement of the elder ladies, proposed a game at cards; and there being but four in number, though no employment was more irksome to Rosilia, she was obliged to comply.

To do himself credit, Melliphant betted high against Mrs. Belmour, who was his antagonist, and lost at every game, paying his debts with the spirit of one indifferent as to the amount. Rosilia, who was his partner, feared that such repeated ill-luck to him, arose from her deficiency in play, and solicited the permission to lay down her cards; but Melliphant, throbbing with a dawning hope, on beholding himself an object of her sympathy, linked by association in her thoughts, either winning or losing as she won or lost, was sensible of a delight too great to yield to her request.

A few more games, however, were scarcely played, when Mrs. De Brooke rose to depart, though prevailed upon first to take some refreshment; various wines being displayed, neatly set out, with a small choice collation.

Mrs. Belmour had given vent to her excellent spirits, which, harmonizing with a natural vivacity ever retained by Mrs. De Brooke, hours had stolen away, and it was later than they could have supposed when they rose to take leave.

Previous to leaving the apartment, Rosilia had been attracted by a glitter, caused, as she imagined, by a refraction of light falling upon a mineral in the cabinet; but upon drawing near, she perceived it was a ray reflected merely from a small piece of common glass; aware that Melliphant possessed a knowledge of botany, she concluded it was placed there for the preservation of some choice botanical plant; upon a closer examination, however, she found it covered only a few dried and withered leaves and stalks of roses and myrtle, which in their present state naturally seemed to her as useless and of no value. She paused, and was about asking for a solution of what appeared to her so perfectly enigmatical, when she was called away by her mother, who was awaiting to depart.

Having taken leave of Mrs. Belmour as she stepped into the next door, her own house, to the great annoyance of Melliphant, Sir Howard passed, who in recognizing them, turned instantly about, and who in accosting Mrs. De Brooke, offered her the support of his arm. Exultation, however, succeeded to Melliphant's displeasure, since he found it had procured him the privilege of taking charge of Rosilia. The

serenity of the night air and cleanness of the foot-pavement, had caused Mrs. De Brooke to prefer walking, rather than returning home in a carriage.

The night was clear but frosty, yet the intense cold was unfelt by Melliphant. Elevated by the wine he had taken, the fever of delirium and of intemperate passion swelled in his veins. Rosilia, under the influence of the keen air, was desirous of quickening her pace, but Melliphant, on the contrary, to prolong the time, would stop at intervals to gather more closely around her, the folds of her mantle, and walked with slow and measured steps, notwithstanding she urged a quicker pace. He wished Sir Howard and her mother might advance far before; he wished also, to prolong each fleeting moment, which, as it passed, conveyed a charm so rapturous on its wings, and losing insensibly that habitual guard he held over himself, exclaimed in impassioned accents, "Oh! what happiness to be thus indulged! Could you walk thus with me all night!—every night!"

In such similar insignificant terms were his incoherent rhapsodies expressed, seeming to Rosilia so little analogous,—so little in unison with the general ideas inspired by Melliphant,—that all he uttered failed of its power.

He had wished to speak of Heloise, but checked himself; the topic might be unprofitable; besides, he had another point in view, upon the success of which

depended, he conceived, his last resource—which was, to teach Rosilia botany from Rousseau's treatise on that science, of which Mr. Wakefield's little work had given her already a very pleasing and general idea, and she could have had no objection to increasing her knowledge of so elegant a study, but certainly not from Rousseau, nor under the tuition of Melliphant.

Making inquiry, whether she had paid attention to his botanical prints, he took occasion to introduce the subject, to which she replied in the negative.

“Then,” added he, “may I hope for the pleasure of your company early some morning, that you may be afforded time for their inspection? Should Mrs. De Brooke be disinclined to accompany you, Mrs. Belmour, I am persuaded will with the greatest pleasure. I could also at the same time show you some trifling collections of my own making; though, in their present state, they do not exhibit much beauty.”

“I perceived,” said Rosilia, “some leaves covered by a bit of glass, in one of the partitions of the cabinet.”

“Those leaves,” replied Melliphant, sighing deeply, and speaking in accents half broken, “Those leaves—every—frag—ment be—be—long—ing to that little sprig of myrtle, and those—rose-leaves—I would not,” throwing the utmost emphasis in his expression, “I would not exchange them for the whole contents of the cabinet; they are prized by me, more than all I possess besides.”

“It is certainly a strange fancy,” observed Rosilia.

“O no, do not call that strange, the mere cursory glance at which operates upon me with all the secret power of a wonderful and magnetic charm! I am attracted to those leaves, dried and withered as they are, by sentiments—yes, by sentiments incorporated with my soul, my life, my being! Can you forget! Is your memory so short? Must I remind you of the contention between Sir Howard and myself about those same leaves. That myrtle and rose,—you granted them to me! I have ever since cherished them! Do you blame me—you surely cannot blame me!”

Wishing to dispel the sentimentality gathering over Melliphant, Rosilia replied to him in raillery, “I wish,” said she, “I had known you were such an admirer of those flowers, I could have procured you some before; but you may still have as many as you please from us, having at present some large pots of each in full blossom.”

That Rosilia should thus unexpectedly have thrown ridicule upon his words, confused, and rendered him at a loss to reply. Seeking to master himself, however, after a short pause, he replied,

“You, who are truly fond of flowers, whose pencil gives to art so finished a representation of nature, how would your pleasure be increased, by uniting with this talent a knowledge of botany. You can form no conception of the delight,—the intellectual

charm,—arising from such a study. If I might be allowed to offer myself as an instructor, to call upon you sometimes for that purpose, and sometimes to be your companion in your excursions to your garden ; in describing to you the wonderful structure, order, and beauty of plants, I should unfold to your infinitely comprehensive mind, such an expansion of ideas, such a field for the exercise as also the recreation of its talents, that the small portion of my time and trouble thus employed would be more than ten-fold rewarded in the effects produced in you.”

Having reached home, Rosilia had but time to express her thanks for so obliging an offer. Sir Howard had already taken leave of Mrs. De Brooke, but he still lingered at the open door ere he departed, apparently to make his bow to Rosilia. His dark brows were closely knit as he passed her, and glancing at Melliphant, the happy Melliphant ! as he conceived him, a look of stern indignation, he rushed by and was presently out of sight.

Though this conduct of Sir Howard was noticed by Melliphant, he seemed to treat it with the coolest indifference ; taking from his pocket a book on leaving Rosilia, he presented it to her, saying, “ May I beg of you the favour to take this, and may I hope you will look into it ; it treats of botany.”

Rosilia was about complying, but a kind Providence shielding her, suggested the idea that by accepting the offered work, and by admitting Melli-

phant as an instructor, he might interpret her compliance into an encouragement of his hopes. She therefore softened her refusal by rendering her acknowledgements as graciously as possible.

CHAPTER VIII.

“Puppy, that curs’d vociferation
Betrays thy life and conversation.
Coxcombs, an ever noisy race,
Are triumphs of their own disgrace.”

GAY.

IT might not be wondered at, with the extensive power possessed by Melliphant to gain ascendancy over the human mind, that he had in some degree insinuated himself into the esteem and regard of Rosilia; his sophistry and hypocrisy so well combined, the secret partiality of which he appeared the victim, manifesting itself by involuntary impulse in feelings too strong for suppression; this, when united to the less concealed and more obtrusive admiration of Sir Howard, might be supposed to have introduced the germ of that poison which each in his turn so industriously sought to infuse into the vestal bosom of Rosilia. On the contrary, every effort to sully her, set her off only in a purer light, gave energy to her principles and confirmed her virtue. But, alas! hovering over that precipice preparing for her, still are we to contemplate her on the verge of destruction and of misery.

The maid who can securely rest,
 And never conflict rack her breast,
 With innocence is haply blest ;
 But, can we say her heart's imprest
 With virtue's deep ingrafted seal,
 To rouse to active, ardent zeal,
 Assert its own, and brighter shine,
 When vice and treacherous arts combine
 To dim its fair transcendant worth
 And blend it with the dross of earth ?
 Ah, no! that virtue, never tried,
 Its name alone can be implied ;
 True virtue rears its stately form
 And bears each buffet of the storm,
 Can let vice eddy in its course,
 And like a rock resist its force.

Melliphant had, often at the gaming table, lost to Sir Howard considerable sums of money, and as it was beyond his ability to discharge them, Sir Howard was the last man whom he would willingly have offended. Imagining from the late tenor of his conduct towards him, that he meditated deceit, that the result might fall in such a manner as to obstruct his views respecting Rosilia, he thought it better not to lose time in conciliating him. He therefore determined to call upon Sir Howard, and lead him if possible to an explanation of his conduct.

Of a furious and impetuous temper, Sir Howard was apparently under its dominion, when Melliphant entered, who, calm, cool, and dispassionate, possessed over him a complete advantage.

“ I fear, Sir Howard,” said he, “ I may unintentionally have offended you ; and as I value your

friendship, I am come to ask an explanation and give redress, if it is in my power."

"What redress," answered Sir Howard vehemently, "can you give me, Sir, for confidence betrayed,—betrayed by having turned it to your own profit? But think you, Sir, I shall tamely submit myself to become your dupe?"

"You wrong me, Sir Howard; I swear by my honour you wrong me."

"Honour!" repeated his antagonist sarcastically.

He would have said more, but he thought it better not to provoke his retorts, which perhaps could be as well applied as his own.

"I thought to have found in you," said he, lowering his accent, "a staunch friend, one who would have aided me in my views, instead of interfering only to oppose them, and throw me at a greater distance from my object. You must know to what I allude,—the affair relating to Rosilia De Brooke."

Sir Howard then used threats and imprecations highly calculated to disquiet his rival, who finding it necessary to appease his wrath, replied,

"Sir Howard, may I beseech you to moderate your feelings and listen to me? without the smallest equivocation or deviation from the truth, I will give you a plain, candid, unvarnished statement of the whole affair, such as it really is. I love Rosilia De Brooke! I will not deny it. Nay, Sir Howard hear me out. It was yourself, you must blame yourself, in having first awakened my imagination in the de-

scription you gave me of that matchless girl! Loving her before I became acquainted with her, I could no longer subdue the desire I had to see her, and found her every thing, and more than you had represented her. Since that hour, my thoughts have never been estranged from her even for one instant of time. Other objects besides have shared with her in your attention. You could never bring yourself to the sacrifice of riches for her sake, unless gilded by fortune: marriage to you is a bitter pill. To me, what is it to me, the ceremony of matrimony? It is as nothing; I regard it not; but should hail it as a blessed institution, the consummation of all my bliss, if it put me into the possession of a Rosilia. I saw you trifling away your time with her, without profiting by the influence you held over her parents; and I, who loved her beyond the power of words to express, was I tamely to have submitted myself, and to have yielded to your prior claims, as you may please to call them. Nay, nay, Sir Howard, a word or two more, and I have done. Could it possibly be supposed I should set myself down a passive spectator and view the various changes in your passion, the indecision and wavering by which you were guided"—

"'Tis enough, enough, Sir," cried Sir Howard, interrupting him. "Tell me at once how far you have proceeded with Rosilia, and spare me your further reflections. Have you been enabled to excite a return of sentiment; think you that you are beloved? 'Tis all I wish to know."

“A return of sentiment in Rosilia!” re-echoed Melliphant; “never! oh, never! she has remained insensible to all; her heart I should believe to be cold, icy cold, but that the quick sensibility of her eye and ever varying expression of her countenance prove the reverse.”

An answer so totally beyond his expectations operated wonders over Sir Howard: his eye continued fixed on Melliphant, as if searching for the conviction of what he had uttered.

“In truth,” said he, softening his accents, “are you thoroughly persuaded of what you say? Rosilia, then, has never given you any certain indication of regard!”

“No, truly, she has not!” repeated Melliphant, in a voice choked by despair.

No longer doubting, Melliphant was then no more esteemed by Sir Howard his happy rival, exulting and triumphing in what he had himself, with such ill success, so ardently desired,—the love of Rosilia. In the joy he felt at finding himself thus undeceived, he extended his hand to Melliphant, who shook it with cordiality; and thus these brothers in iniquity were once more friends.

Melliphant then left Sir Howard, who, elated by the intelligence he had received, though he abandoned all idea, from his past unsuccessful efforts, of gaining upon the affections of Rosilia, yet, as continuing disengaged, as having at least no rival in her heart, a renewed energy was given to his actions, and the

villainous designs he had formed against her. His curricule, at the hour appointed, appearing at the door, he jumped into it and drove at once to the De Brookes.

Mrs. Philimore had just departed; she had called for the purpose of giving to Mrs. De Brooke some friendly advice and warning relative to Sir Howard, who, report said, was paying his addresses to her youngest daughter. Not finding her at home however, she delicately hinted the circumstance to Rosilia, asking her if Sir Howard Sinclair did not call very often.

“Not so often as formerly,” replied Rosilia.

“He has been particular in his attention to you, has he not?”

“Nothing more than is common with men of gallantry, I believe,” answered she with a smile.

“I am inclined to think otherwise,” returned Mrs. Philimore; “his partiality for you, my dear young friend, is very evident; but let me assure you, from good authority, his character is doubtful; his whole conduct involves ambiguity, of which being aware, you will be enabled to judge and decide for yourself.”

Scarcely had she left the door than Sir Howard alighted.

He was one of those professed men of pleasure who, in his general intercourse with the world and fashionable life, did not even think it necessary to save appearances, openly boasting of his midnight ex-

cesses, with a freedom and undaunted air, which seemed to set decency at defiance. And thus it was that Mrs. Philimore had become acquainted with his real character, while, by his greater circumspection and care in the presence of the De Brookes, he had appeared to them in a light by no means exceptionable. Finding however it answered no determined end, and becoming completely tired of counterfeiting, rejoicing also in the hope, from the violent measures he meant to adopt, of shortly having Rosilia entirely within his power, united to the unsuspecting confidence with which he had been invariably received by the General and Mrs. De Brooke, and which he conceived, gave him, a certain access to Rosilia, not considering, under the influence of a lawless presumption, that her condition in life might keep him at a distance, and place her above his freedoms; but having no regard for female chastity in any rank of life whatever, when occasion offered, he was ever ready to betray himself, and taking advantage of the General's absence from home, he became very indifferent as to any longer wearing the mask.

It may suit Melliphant, thought he, with his leisurely and methodical plans and systems; for his part he would no more trifle with fortune, but make a daring enterprise; what had it hitherto availed, playing the hypocrite, and seeming what he was not, a canting fool?

Rosilia was alone, employed with her needle in the back drawing-room, when the voice of Sir Howard

caught her ear. Her mother being absent from home, and her mind being recently impressed by the discourse of Mrs. Philimore, she was in the act of precipitately leaving the apartment, when Sir Howard opposed her flight; her confusion was evident; when assuming an air and attitude of admiration, his arms extended as if transported with ecstasy, the words "beauty, beautiful," burst from his lips.

That respect, even to reverence, he had been accustomed to wear in her presence, then, from the consciousness that her heart was inaccessible to him, totally vanished in all the real levity of his character; he stood boldly contemplating her youthful charms, adorned as they were by a modesty that was matchless, unawed by the dignified reserve her looks expressed; he endeavoured to rally her out of it;—it was rusticity, prudery, and quite out of fashion; it was entirely foreign to the present manners. Gaiety, sprightliness, even levity, was consistent with her age, and which was all she wanted to render her completely captivating! bewitching in the extreme!

Offended pride and delicacy suffused Rosilia's cheek with a crimson blush. Sir Howard had been disapproving of a too great nicety of feeling; but, when he observed its enchanting effects, his heart contradicted his words, and whispered, "That a woman given to blush, possessed one of the loveliest of female graces!"

Taking advantage of the pause, as he stood gazing on her, Rosilia attempted to pass, in order to shun

the presence of one so unfeeling and senseless as Sir Howard then appeared to her. To prevent her escape, he audaciously sprang forward, and while in the act of closing the door, seized the trembling girl by the arm. Her courage and resolution, however, were immediately aroused; she resisted his grasp, and with a voice imperious in its accents, desired him instantly to release her.

Freed from his presence, her first suggestion was to send the servant to inform Sir Howard that Mrs. De Brooke was not at home, and that it was uncertain when she might return, supposing it would induce him to depart. Instead of departing, however, in order to draw her back again, he sent a message to her, stating that he felt himself very unwell, and was consequently deterred from going immediately, and that previous to which, having a few words to say to her, he begged of her to return.

Supposing it might be to offer some excuse for his conduct, and not wishing to give rise to suspicion in the servant, Rosilia, though reluctantly, was tempted to comply.

In the hope of disarming her resentment, and of exciting her compassion, he had artfully thrown himself upon a sofa, his head reclining upon his hand; when, upon again seeing her, scarcely uplifting himself, he said in the most plaintive voice, "I am very ill,—very ill indeed;" upon which, not receiving a reply, he half unclosed his eye-lids, and sinking his head backwards upon the couch, added in tones of

rebuke, "Have you no consolation for me; not one word of pity to offer? come—come, and sit by me; come, and prescribe for me." Far from exhibiting the languor of sickness, his countenance was flushed by an exhilarating glow.

Not deigning to give reply, and not wishing to indulge him in a notion of his self-importance by a second time leaving the room, Rosilia walked to the inner apartment in which she had been before seated, and resumed her work, where, after a short interval, Sir Howard followed. He placed himself opposite to her; a serene and majestic gravity invested her; his former levity vanished; he saw "virtue in her own shape; how lovely! saw and pined his loss!"

Sir Howard in the pursuit of Rosilia had been encouraged equally by her genuine sensibility and unaffected innocence, as by her alluring beauty. But when in removing the veil, which before only imperfectly concealed him, he disclosed his real character; her dignity, her purity rose so full upon his view, as deeply to penetrate him with the idea, that by the mere force of her virtue alone, she would be enabled to defend herself against the attacks of the most abandoned libertine in existence!

Thus meditating, he was half inclined to forsake the desperate plot he had combined by which to secrete her from her family. With a serious and respectful air he left his seat, inwardly ejaculating, strange and wondrous creature! and pressing his hand upon his bosom, bowed profoundly low, and departed.

No sooner was he gone, than that energy of feeling, which had till then supported Rosilia, yielded to the oppression which overburdened her heart. Tears that she strove in vain to repress fast chased each other down her cheeks—wounded delicacy and virtuous pride depriving her of the power of checking them. She continued weeping while reflecting that, did she make known to her father the insulting conduct she had met with from Sir Howard, he would pursue him with his vengeance even to an extremity she trembled to think of. If in being repulsed from the house, as he doubtless would be, the first time he entered it after the return of her father from Wales, the result might terminate in much affliction both to her mother and herself. She resolved, therefore, to conceal the matter from her parents, in future to shun Sir Howard, to be guarded in her conduct towards him, and never again to allow him a private interview, were it possible to prevent it.

Reflecting upon what Mrs. Philimore had said, Melliphant, whom she had ever felt disposed to esteem as the associate of Sir Howard, became insensibly lessened in her good opinion, particularly on her calling to mind the urgency with which he had recommended for her perusal such works as, in their tendency to excite the imagination, are usually deemed pernicious.

Having for some time sat musing over a succession of afflicting thoughts which presented themselves, and again resolving to shun the authors of

them, her spirits calmed, and she went to seek their further relief by a walk in her favourite garden. There it was true she had once met Melliphant; but conceiving it to be accidental, that no further intrusion would molest her, with a light foot she bounded along the winding path, where, on either side the box, the variegated holly and luxuriant laurustinus profusely clustered. Her eye wandering round through the intermixture of beds and branches, she beheld somebody on the opposite side walking leisurely along. The gait and figure resembled Sir Howard; could it really be he? she was persuaded he was not in the habit of frequenting the gardens; she had never seen him there.

Nevertheless the object she beheld was truly Sir Howard; he had purposely traced her, and supposing himself unnoticed, he sought an opportunity for joining her. Her heart fluttered like the timid fawn aroused by the enemy in view; she would have flown, but knew not where to fly. She stood for a moment still, concealed by the thickly interwoven shrubs, that for the purpose seemed to offer their timely aid; but in the next moment, the better, as she hoped, to elude discovery, she gave to her steps the speed of wings, and made a circuit round the more retired part of the garden.

Breathless with agitation, she had reached the gate, when, suddenly springing from behind her, Sir Howard advanced to open it; she returned his obsequious bow by a distant courtesy; she passed him,

but whilst doing so, he begged permission to escort her home.

His manners were humble, his eye was down-cast; thus he conducted her in silence, until she had nearly reached her home, when he murmured something of apology for having been betrayed in his morning's visit to have acted in a manner perhaps too familiar, but which, he assured her, had not arisen from disrespect, but from the intimacy and flattering unreserve, more than a common friend, with which he had been honoured by the family. Though but indistinctly articulated, such was the tenor of the speech Rosilia gathered, which pleased, whilst at the same time it piqued her, as seeming to convey a censure against herself for having acted with over severity.

Sir Howard had thought proper to make this vindication of himself, hoping that by appeasing her resentment, it might cause her to soften her account of his conduct to her mother, whom he knew to be particularly tenacious of her daughter's conduct, but whom, from the little knowledge she had of the vices of the world, he had easily beguiled into a complete persuasion of his honor and uprightness; but, above all, it was the wrath and indignation of the General he most dreaded, sensibly aware, in the warmth and impetuosity of his character, how justly and strongly such feelings might be vented against him.

With a look forcibly pleading forgiveness he left her, saying he would call again in the evening: the

evening came, and brought, according to his promise, Sir Howard.

The circumstance of the morning, by throwing restraint upon his behaviour, rendered him less presumptuous, and thence his company was more agreeable to Rosilia than she had of late found it; conducting himself as in the early stage of his acquaintance, perhaps with even more circumspection, he frequently relapsed into silence as though labouring under an oppression of mind, and supporting conversation only as an effort due to politeness. At last availing himself of the entrance of Mrs. Belmour and Melliphant, he retired to the adjoining apartment, where approaching the window which commanded a view of the country, he threw himself into a chair and became profoundly engrossed in thought.

After a short interval, Rosilia, anxious to show her perfect forgiveness of the past, and restore him from the melancholy mood into which he seemed sunk, gently drew near to the spot where he was seated; her work apparatus still lay in disorder upon the table, and whilst collecting them together, having entered unperceived by Sir Howard, he started upon beholding her.

It was one of those winter nights when the darkened clouds presage a tempest; the winds howled, and the lightning flashed at intervals, presenting a scene far from unpleasing to Rosilia, and harmonizing with her present feelings.

Sir Howard also, in witnessing such scenes, felt a gratification, but the effect they produced in him was utterly opposed to that experienced by Rosilia. "A night such as this," said he, "suits with the gloomy habit of my soul."

A sentiment so serious, from one usually influenced by volatility, was unexpected by Rosilia, being at the little time aware, that Sir Howard often yielded himself to the indulgence of a propensity of a nature singular and peculiar. Scenes such as struck the mind with horror, such as others shunned as obnoxious, were by him courted and sought after with avidity. Often, in the deep stillness of the midnight hour, he would descend into those cold vaults, the habitations of the dead, or wander over the graves of the departed.

" Oft seen in charnel vaults and sepulchres
Lingering and setting by a new made grave." ~

Not with the view of teaching himself the useful lesson respecting the vanity of all earthly things, but because something within him, analogous to, and corresponding with, the sepulchral gloom, attracted him thither.

Influenced by similar feelings, he ever bent his steps where he might behold that dreadful spectacle, —the criminal about to be launched into eternity. Death, whenever thus brought before him in idea, the more appalling in its terrors the more delightful to him, overwhelming him with sensations difficult

to describe, of which the pure in heart can form no just conception.

Rosilia, on the contrary, loved to image to herself the immortal soul, not as in its perishable tenement of clay, the mere mortal covering which at death is consigned to its kindred dust; but the soul, or spirit, such as it is when it has burst those fetters that confined it here, and thus emancipated, soars beyond its terrestrial boundaries into spheres of supreme bliss, an element congenial with its immaterial nature, its spiritual state of being. It was of immortality, regeneration, the philosophy of the mind, infinity increasing in perfection, and endless perpetuity, upon which she had been taught to meditate, and loved to dwell, and which often drew from her heart the devout and holy sigh of unfeigned gratitude and love.

Such respectively were the distinctly opposite ideas of Sir Howard and Rosilia, as each mutely contemplated the awful scene before them, and which led each insensibly to speak of those latter moments to which all must arrive—Rosilia was transported in heavenly thought to the paradise of angels; while Sir Howard, on the contrary, talked but of the dissolution of matter, when beauty, falling into atoms, would exhibit but a terrific and ghastly spectacle!

Meanwhile Melliphant, in the front apartment, finding that Sir Howard had engrossed Rosilia, and having a great desire to approach, dared not venture to offend his rival by encroaching upon his prerogative. Whilst thus keeping apart, he endured, almost

the whole of the evening, the tortures of the rack ; he was prevented from conversing with her who filled his every thought ; and he had but time to tell her that he had obtained another volume of the **Botanical Plants**, of rare and choice beauty, and which was open for her inspection, whenever she proposed making him so happy, by honouring him with a morning call at his house : at the same time reminding her that **Mrs. Belmour** would most gladly attend her.

CHAPTER IX.

“ What though the field be lost !
All is not lost ; th’ unconquerable will,
And study of revenge.”

MILTON.

IT was about the hour of eleven when Rosilia entered her apartment for the night ; and the late conversation of Sir Howard recurring to her thoughts, she did not feel disposed to sleep. The warning, also, that had been given her regarding him by Mrs. Philimore rushed upon her recollection. Unable to penetrate the cause which had wrought him into so serious a mood that evening, “ One who is capable of being thus impressed,” thought she, “ cannot be innately bad. His view of mortality, it is true, leans to the dark side ; yet he must be well persuaded that nought but virtue and a well-spent life will avail him whenever he is overtaken by that awful hour—the last of his existence !” During the interval of such reflections the winds ceased to rage, and a perfect calm ensued.

She rose from her seat, approached the window, and drew from before it those curtains which veiled from her sight the distant country and the glories of the Heavens ! How far was it from entering her thoughts, to conceive that Sir Howard and Melliphant,

restless and disturbed in spirit, had been wandering about her dwelling. In seeing the light beam from her window, that innocent object, who had been the chief theme of their conversation, and whom they imagined to be wrapt in quiet slumbers, stood revealed before them.

The moon had risen in all her pale majestic grandeur; the watchman, in pacing his usual round, had called the hour of twelve; but Rosilia, in preference to retiring to rest, contemplated that heavenly orb, so often the subject of the poet's muse. Scarcely a cloud chequered the dark expanse, the general stillness being only occasionally broken by the bark of a watch-dog, and the tolling of a bell as if from some distant church. What a night for meditation!

Rosilia felt her soul, transported above the vanity of earthly things, to rest solely upon its Omnipotent Creator. "Alas!" she thought, "how often have I sighed for other pleasures! The seclusion which attends my youth, how often have I lamented—what a sacrifice have I thought it! But never! Oh! never! have I wished for an over-indulgence in the tumultuous pleasures of life. Plays, operas, concerts, afford me no relief; I return from them vexed, dissatisfied with myself, weary of a scene that never presents any one who could associate with me in the bonds of friendship,—one whom I could truly esteem,—one in whom I could place an entire confidence,—who could participate with me in joys, pure, elevated, refined,—who could direct and influence my taste, enlighten my

judgment, and correct my errors. If ever such a friend should fall to my lot!—but hush!—be still, my heart!—Ah! no!—such a bliss will never be thine! But if perchance it should, the world, and all its vain uncertain joys, I will renounce without a sigh! Fixed but to one—the centre, the central point of every future happiness.”

The enthusiasm of her thoughts caused in her a total suspension of movement, and she remained at the open window. Alas! how little did she suspect that those base destroyers, then gazing upon her like midnight assassins, only waited an occasion to infuse their deadly venom, and rob her for ever of that sweet enjoyment of breathing forth her soul in language so pure and pious!

As each contemplated her, each hoped for the fruition of his own infernal plan. Despicable wretches! Think ye to pollute the sacred shrine of Truth? can your deep envenomed guile spread its malignancy in the fair tabernacle of Rosilia's breast? Will not hypocrisy drop its mask? Will ye not appear in all your false deceptive colours, ere virtue falls, or innocence is betrayed, and existence ceases to have its charms!

“ Virtue may be assail'd, but never hurt,
 Surpris'd by unjust force, but not enthrall'd;
 Yea, that which mischief meant most harm,
 Shall in the happy trial prove most glory.”

Rosilia has closed the curtains of her window,—she has withdrawn to the interior of the room,—no longer is she visible to the unhallowed eyes of those vicious

companions; but, as if transfixed, they still remain, their eyes uplifted to the window whence she has vanished. Sir Howard was the first who spoke.

“Can the practice,” said he, “of a system, so rigid as hers, be called happiness!—wasting the blooming spring of her charms in a life of mere vegetation. She has still to taste of the cup of pleasure, and can form no idea of what a delicious draught it is.”

Ruminating more deeply over his own dark reflections, Melliphant started at the sound of his companion's voice, but still hung his head and maintained silence. Having reached his door, Sir Howard invited Melliphant to walk in; and, as was frequently their custom, they spent the night in gambling. The manners of Sir Howard were unusually agitated, a sort of restless irritability prevailed over him. He spoke rapidly upon subjects of indifferent concern, and foreign to the moment. The game they played was hazard; and, depending upon his usual good luck, he accepted of Melliphant's bets, which ran high, and lost without being conscious of doing so, —consulting at different intervals his watch with the interest of one who had an appointment requiring to be kept with exactitude, but, in reality, only to note to himself the advance of the hours, which dragged too heavily for him.

Melliphant continued to win, and, at length, transported to find himself free, that he had cleared off the debt so long owing to Sir Howard, springing from his seat he would have departed, had not Sir

Howard again challenged him and demanded his stay. By a long succession of good fortune on the side of Melliphant, Sir Howard lost to a very large amount, while in the hope of recovering, he continued playing, and doubling the bets, until Melliphant, favoured as before, won every thing.

Pale, trembling, enraged, Sir Howard saw himself, in a short space of time, deprived of every pecuniary resource. The love of money held its predominating influence over his mind; so that now, with feelings of bitter disappointment, he not only bemoaned his recent loss, but the frustration also, for the present, of that nefarious act he had so deeply planned and arranged. He found himself on a sudden defeated,—and by whom? was it by Melliphant?—by himself rather, and by his own egregious folly.

Calm and unmoved, Melliphant regarded, from under his bent brows, the tumult raging within him; and, whilst maintaining the most sedate aspect, proposed his taking his revenge. With a hurried and impulsive motion, Sir Howard approached the table,—cast the dice,—which were still against him.

“ I am ruined !” exclaimed he, starting up, “ I am undone,—irretrievably lost ! My affairs are involved, and all besides, Sir, is at your disposal.”

With a profound, cool, and sullen air, Melliphant viewed him whom he had reduced from a state of comparative affluence, to one of absolute distress,—giving himself to bursts of passion, and striding the

room with hasty and unequal steps. Melliphant spoke, and Sir Howard stopped abruptly, facing him, to listen to what he had to propose.

“Wealth!” said he, “what is wealth to me? I despise its glittering toys! It never was the object of my pursuit,—nor is it now. It will not purchase me the blissful certainty of being loved by Rosilia! Sir Howard, take the dice again,—let us venture the stake for what to me is of infinitely more value than all the mines of Peru! Let us play for Rosilia! If you win her, I will purchase her of you; I will give you, in exchange for her, all that I have this night won; and should the prize become mine!—if that you will promise me henceforth to renounce all claim to her, and even to lend me your assistance, should I require it, in aiding me to obtain her—if, I say, you will frankly promise this, I will restore to you the half, and more, of what you have just now lost,—reserving to myself that only more immediately necessary to my present emergencies. In a situation so desperate as yours, how can you one moment hesitate? Reflect, Sir Howard; the advantages of fortune are entirely on your side,—in that respect, you cannot be the loser; your gain is certain!”

The early morn was beginning to shed its ray, and ere that period would revolve,—ere another morning dawned and sent its light to re-illumine this world of darkness,—Sir Howard had allowed his ideas to revel in the raptures of carrying off Rosilia,—of bearing her away beyond the utmost stretch of human

ingenuity to discover. Cruel alternative!—at the very moment his fondest hopes were about to be realized,—that happiness should thus elude his grasp!

Torturing state of mind! to what should he resort? The ardour of his passion for Rosilia insensibly cooled when he surveyed the danger, the numerous embarrassments that would necessarily surround him from the heavy pecuniary loss he had sustained. Dispirited, bewildered, how could he, at such a crisis, summon resolution for carrying on so desperate an undertaking?

Melliphant awaited his decision; Sir Howard seized the dice from his hand; pecuniary necessities, ideas of entanglement and ruin, prevailed over every other consideration less urgent.

“You know the terms!” exclaimed Melliphant.

The dice were thrown, and Melliphant,—the triumphant and exulting Melliphant,—won the chance!

His face crimsoned with joy, and he bounded like lightning from his seat.

“Auspicious omen!” cried he, “Sir Howard, you have sworn to the agreement.”

“You need not doubt me,” replied he, “I shall fulfil it.”

Thus with them terminated that night, and with it that iniquitous plot contrived by Sir Howard, which, had it not been thus defeated, would have involved not only the innocent Rosilia, but her suffering

family, in the greatest of their hitherto sustained afflictions.

In the regular correspondence of Rosilia with her sister, she had not failed to transmit accounts of Sir Howard and Melliphant, and of the suspected character and warning she had received, respecting the former, from Mrs. Philimore. Oriana, in consequence, conjured up to her fancy a thousand fears, and imagined her sister to be surrounded by dangers. Some months had passed since she had seen her family, and, beginning to feel impatient for a renewal of that happiness, her aunt obligingly gratified her wishes, and she once again found herself in the embrace of her parents and sister.

The General had returned from his excursion into Wales, and the family were all assembled to receive her. She feared she pained their minds by giving them those accounts she had so frequently heard to the prejudice of Sir Howard, finding that he had not lost the estimation of her father, who, so little disposed to mistrust or observe defects, maintained that he was an honourable man, sometimes, perhaps, by a natural volatility, betrayed into indiscretions, but which, in his prudent and reflecting moments, he himself was the first to condemn. Oriana, nevertheless, thought it prudent to caution her sister, wholly in the dark as to Sir Howard having so suddenly relinquished his claims, and that it was now against Melliphant only that Rosilia had to stand upon her guard.

“ My dear Oriana,” said Rosilia, “ your apprehensions are groundless ; how is it in the power of either Sir Howard or his friend to injure me ?”

“ Ah ! Rosilia ! you are so unsuspecting, you know so little of the wickedness of the world and its deceptive arts ; but at any rate receive the affectionate advice of a sister in this matter, and never go with either of them to any public place ; never see them alone, should they ever happen to call when our parents are not at home. You change colour,—you can scarcely credit what I say to you ; but trust me those men are seeking an opportunity to undermine your happiness ; avoid them, dearest Rosilia, as you would a pestilence !”

“ You carry your fears to an undue extreme,” replied Rosilia ; “ never have either of them received from me the most distant mark of encouragement ; and, believe me, no power on earth could prevail upon me to become the wife of either.”

“ Of that I am assured,” rejoined Oriana, “ and of which, doubtless, they are, likewise, assured ; and there rests the danger,—causing the greater suspicion to attach to them. Why does Sir Howard live so near, and yet conceal his residence ? What mystery does it not involve ?”

Rosilia shuddered at the insinuations her sister’s reasonings thus conveyed, and resolved to act in accordance with her advice ; to shun their presence as much as possible, and when she could not avoid it, to be distant and reserved in her manners to each.

It then became Rosilia's turn to offer the language of sympathy and consolation. Oriana replied to her anxious inquiries concerning Philimore in a style calculated to surprise and pain her beyond measure.

“If I have not,” said she, “written to you upon the subject of my grief, it was because I feared my letter might fall into the hands of our parents. Oh! Rosilia, you can form no idea of the sufferings, the pangs that Philimore has overwhelmed me with; his affection for me is wholly withdrawn; he has ceased to write to me; my name has become odious to him; if, as my friend Miss Morris informs me, I by chance am ever mentioned in his presence, his countenance assumes an expression of gloomy displeasure, too striking to escape notice.”

“I have myself,” replied Rosilia, “witnessed such a conduct in him, but never could suppose it proceeded from what you say. But why!—what proof have you that he is influenced by inconstancy?”

“How else am I to attribute,” continued Oriana, “the excessive coldness, apathy, and indifference towards me, into which he has fallen. May Heaven, Rosilia, shield you from the misery he has caused me to undergo—so cruelly, so barbarously, has he acted towards me!”

Mortification, disappointment, and indignation, were by turns manifested in the speech of Oriana, as she continued to paint to her sister the blighted hopes, withered prospects, and severe wounds her heart had sustained. Philimore was then in London,

but did not, according to his wont, hasten to see his Oriana; who, in taking leave of her family on her return to the Park, silently, yet deeply ejaculated,—“I shall never see him more!” starting at the thought, as if foretold it by some unerring and fatal prediction!

CHAPTER X.

“ When nature’s blush by custom is wiped off,
And conscience, deaden’d by repeated strokes,
Has into manners naturalized our crimes,
The curse of curses is, our curse to love !”

YOUNG.

ROSILIA now looked forward with much solicitude for the period when she should return to the Bower, notwithstanding she dreaded the effects upon her mind of its too great seclusion, and then more particularly, from being deprived of the company of her sister. Yet she wished to escape altogether from the society of those whom she could no longer regard, and whose visits had in consequence become irksome to her.

Her departure from London, however, was not postponed so long as she had expected. Her parents towards the middle of March, took the sudden resolution of repairing to Wales immediately; what could thus have hastened their determination, they did not think proper to reveal to her. Dr. Lovesworth visited at the house more frequently of late, and often regarded her with an expression that marked his interest in her welfare. It seemed as if

it had been by his persuasions, her mother had been led to leave London sooner than she had intended.

So precipitately had they made their resolve, that when Sir Howard and Mr. Melliphant were informed of it, the latter felt as if a frightful gulph was opening to entomb his hopes for ever! Driven to the last extremity, where was then his stoicism? In all the real bitterness of woe, he sat like one stupified. At length, having brought himself to decide upon some plan or other, he seized his pen, knowing that now no further opportunity would ever be allowed him for meeting Rosilia alone, his only alternative was to endeavour to express on paper, the violent and contending feelings by which his heart was torn, in language which, if hers was not composed of steel, must effectually melt it. "Pity," thought he, "is nearly allied to love! 'Tis now my sole resource; nothing else is left me but to work upon the soft compassion, the sympathy, the overflowing sensibility of her nature."

Scarcely had he finished his letter, than it was destroyed; another was written, which shared the same fate. He threw himself back into his chair in despair, ruminating upon his situation. "How poor is language," thought he, "to convey what I would utter." He made a third attempt,—an appeal, strong and energetic, which, though it did not please him, he would nevertheless venture to send;—but how? He thought of an expedient, having no other on which to determine; he sought Sir Howard, who

had promised him his assistance, and by such promises had redeemed a considerable portion of his lost money. Thus purchased over to his interests, he could not refuse to assist him.

Having accordingly arranged their plans, he and Sir Howard proceeded together to the De Brookes about that time in the evening when the General was usually absent upon a visit to Dr. Lovesworth. Instead of ascending with him to the drawing-room, he had instructed Sir Howard to remain in the parlour, and to send up the servant with a message to Mrs. De Brooke, requesting a moment's conference with her; she accordingly descended, and while thus engaged, Melliphant, seizing the auspicious moment, bounded up the staircase; but on entering the apartment where he expected to find Rosilia alone, he found himself also in the presence of Dr. Lovesworth. He attempted to conceal his chagrin by an air of unconcern. Rosilia was occupied in the perusal of the "Scottish Minstrel," for the loan of which she was indebted to him. He spoke to her of the work with ease and fluency, pointing out to her observation those passages most worthy of note. Dr. Lovesworth spoke not, but his penetrating look threw upon his words and actions a restraint the most intolerable. The letter he had brought with him, for the purpose of delivering to her, remained in his pocket; he had no possibility of conveying it to her in such a manner as to escape detection from the Doctor.

Mrs. De Brooke having at this period entered, Melliphant made his bow, and hastened to rejoin Sir Howard, who remained below, and who having renounced for ever his pretensions to Rosilia in favour of Melliphant, was determined, if possible, never again to tempt himself, and his pledged faith, by a sight of her, for fear of being induced to revoke it; and since there was no further possibility of procuring to himself the prize he had so long kept in view, it but little concerned him into whose hands she might then fall.

The passion of revenge had long predominated over him; aiming at her destruction, since he was no longer able to obtain her for himself, why should he withhold his assistance to precipitate her into the arms of Melliphant? If revenge was sweet, how could it meet its gratification better, than by plunging her into the power of the dark, designing, hypocritical Melliphant! He to whom he owed so much,—to whom he was so much indebted,—how could he otherwise repay the infinite obligations he had laid him under, by his restoration of the property he had lost to him at play!

“Well,” said he, to Melliphant, upon his rejoining him, “have you succeeded to your wishes?”

“By no means,” replied the other; “the letter still remains in my pocket. That cursed parson was there, with his sanctified priestly countenance; his dark searching eye, was scarcely once removed from me.”

“ Dr. Lovesworth, I suppose you mean,” said Sir Howard.

“ The same ; but we must yet endeavour to elude him. Sir Howard, may I ask of you to play the same part again to-morrow? Make any excuse, invent what you will, to engage Mrs. De Brooke below, whilst I make use of my time with her daughter above !”

This arrangement being formed, they betook themselves to their respective homes.

Melliphant was aware that the next day would be a very busy one with the General, it being the last of his stay in town, and necessarily requiring his absence from home. An occasion certainly might offer for his seeing Rosilia alone, if but for a few minutes ; and those minutes he determined should not be lost to him.

After a night of extreme irritation, as soon as Melliphant had made a hasty breakfast, he hastened from his home to seek Sir Howard, whose assistance he found to be absolutely essential. Sir Howard was dressing, but the business of the toilet at length over, habited in an elegant morning suit, he surveyed himself in a full-length mirror, alternately looking at himself and Melliphant.

Though vain of his appearance, his form wanted height ; Melliphant, if less handsome than Sir Howard, was in his person nicely proportioned ; and though in general negligent of his attire, he had then, notwithstanding the extreme state of agitation under

which he laboured, dressed himself with the greatest care. Sir Howard thought he had never seen him look to such advantage. They mounted the curricie, in waiting, and drove to Mrs. Belmour's, with the view of making her a party in the plot.

Sir Howard then, as acting openly in concert with Melliphant, was pleased to avail himself of a moment so propitious to advance his former interested designs upon the widow. Charmed to find she had brought him to her feet again, she resolved for a time to detain him there, flattered as she felt herself, and wavering with indecision as to whether she should adopt the title of ladyship or not. This high sounding title of distinction was most agreeable to her ear; but the idea of yielding up the sceptre she now held in her own hand, and placing it in that of one who would doubtless sway with absolute authority, "puzzled the will," and induced her, ere she decided, to reserve the matter for further consideration.

Having been instructed by Melliphant to act according to his desires, they left her to drive to the De Brookes.

"Are the ladies at home?" asked Sir Howard.

"My mistress," answered the servant, "is in the drawing-room."

"And her daughter?" inquired Sir Howard.

"She is engaged in her own apartment."

Proceeding to mount the staircase with Melliphant, he whispered as he did so, "I would have remained below had she been with her mother, to give you the

desired opportunity ; as it is, I will ascend, but shall leave the room as soon as she enters it, and will then send up the message as planned to bring Mrs. De Brooke down to me.”

They entered the apartment, where they found Mrs. De Brooke making some arrangements previous to her departure for the country. Sir Howard engaged her in discourse, whilst the heart of Melliphant incessantly fluttered ; his ear was constantly on the watch, listening for the light step of Rosilia ;—she came not. How precarious was his situation ! dreading every second of time, that the intrusion of another might again throw obstacles on his plan.

Glancing his eye towards him, Sir Howard at length, with an air of affected indifference, asked after Miss De Brooke, and whether he might not be gratified by an occasion of bidding her adieu.

“Certainly,” replied Mrs. De Brooke, ringing the bell, and desiring the servant who entered to tell her daughter she wished to see her in the drawing-room.

Tortured by doubt and fear, Melliphant had scarcely respired, when, as light dispels darkness, and diffuses gladness around, Rosilia herself appeared. The reflection, that but the next day was to transport her far from London, had, in chasing distrust, with its natural concomitants, restraint and reserve, given a sweet and placid composure to her demeanour. Sir Howard and Melliphant were both before her ; the former how changed in manners and in aspect ! the

usual glow of his countenance being replaced by an almost ashy paleness; and not one word or look of his accustomed gallantry escaping him. Melliphant spoke little, but in his unassuming address and manners seemed, as ever he had been wont to appear, the mild, the worthy, and sensible Melliphant! Little did she imagine how well, by his bland expressions and gentle mien, he could insinuate himself into the favour of the unsuspecting.

As if suddenly recollecting himself, Sir Howard started from his seat.

“I do not intend, Mrs. De Brooke,” said he, “to bid farewell at present, but shall call again, when I trust I shall also have the happiness of seeing the General;” and, making a hasty bow, he abruptly left the room.

After a few minutes the servant entered, with a message from him, desiring to see Mrs. De Brooke in the parlour, having something to communicate which had escaped him. Mrs. De Brooke descended; when Melliphant was put into possession of that moment so anxiously desired, so much sought for by him.

He seemed at first like one confounded and bereft of every faculty, but, from the urgent pressure of the interval, he suddenly recovered himself. He first spoke to Rosilia in vindication of himself relative to the works he had recommended to her perusal; when, after some further preliminary remarks, he rose and approached Rosilia, taking a small paper packet from his pocket.

“That,” said he, committing it to her lap, “will better explain the motives which led me so unhappily to offend you; may I beseech you to read it, and to extend your clemency towards me in doing so?”

His lip quivered, his countenance varied from white to scarlet; he hastily trod the apartment, and had but time to throw himself into the seat he had quitted, when Mrs. De Brooke re-entered.

“You must prepare yourself, my dear,” said she, addressing herself to Rosilia, “to go instantly to Mrs. Belmour; she has sent me a note, to desire the favour of our coming down to see her; it appears she is too unwell to leave her room. And she will be so distressed, she says, if we leave town without bidding her farewell.”

The heart of Melliphant sank within him; he feared that Mrs. De Brooke intended accompanying her daughter, and that Sir Howard had not properly acted his part.

“I will get ready immediately,” answered Rosilia.

“Half an hour will be time enough,” added Mrs. De Brooke, again consulting the note; “it is earlier than the time Mrs. Belmour has specified. You must go alone, and make my excuses for not coming with you,—Sir Howard having laid his injunctions upon me not to leave home, being desirous of introducing a friend of his, ere we leave town.”

“So far our plot then has well succeeded,” thought Melliphant, rising from his seat, and saying aloud,

“ I am engaged to go to a distant part of the town this morning, and I fear have already exceeded the time appointed, or I should have offered to conduct Miss De Brooke on her intended visit.” He then made his bow, and left the room.

Meanwhile, Rosilia in her apartment, previous to making arrangements for her walk, ran her eye over the contents of Melliphant’s letter. In the most glowing and impassioned language, it described the long and secret passion with which his heart had been overwhelmed, and was then torn, under the presage of an event the most grievous, that of never more seeing her! Her constant indifference, and a sense of his own unworthiness, had caused him to wrap up his feelings in the deepest folds of his heart; though to stifle and subdue them was impossible. Often when he might have appeared indifferent to all things around him, his soul had been most keenly alive and susceptible to the deepest impressions. He begged of her to forgive him this confession of his love.

“ Your scorn,” wrote he, “ yes, your scorn, I could better bear, than that you should for one moment imagine I could be insensible to your attractions! Alas! you are unacquainted with the heart which adores you, in which your image is engraven, and which, after it ceases to beat, will descend with it to the grave.”

He then entered upon a brief vindication of his conduct, relative to the motives which induced him

to recommend her works which had appeared to have offended her. "The Sorrows of Werter," because it so fully described a passion of which he was himself the victim. "The Man of Feeling," because in the character of the hero he perceived traits resembling his own, and because the passion by which he was affected, equally affected him, and might in like manner terminate his existence. "*La Nouvelle Héloïse*," because it painted those domestic scenes of which he had sometimes dared to think.

So terminated his epistle, which as Rosilia closed, a profound sigh escaped her. Her bosom panted for the enjoyment of conjugal happiness, with all its tender and endearing ties. She had affections to bestow, but none possessed them, and which had often caused her to feel sensible of a dearth, a vacuity, a species of isolation. Her heart was as it should be, in the order intended by her Creator, its affections, though not meeting with gratification,—an effect arising from the derangements and perversions in human life, a depraved state of society,—yet as such affections were given to form henceforth her paradise, of holy and sacred origin, springing direct from Deity! no shame, no dishonour could be attached to them—consistent were they with the nicest ideas that can be formed of female delicacy, innocence, and chastity!

Rosilia re-perused the letter of Melliphant; again folded it, and consigned it to the table; whilst her heart deeply and inwardly, but with regret, acknow-

ledged Melliphant was not the man upon whom she could repose herself; that she had nought but pity, forgiveness,—perhaps a cold esteem,—to bestow upon him. Her former disapprobation naturally of itself vanished; the cause in which it originated, she imagined, was now clear, evident, and convincing; no longer enveloped in shade on account of the great caution he had ever made use of, to conceal his attachment from the observation of any but herself.

His want of ingenuousness she might still declaim against, visible in so many concurrent circumstances,—the recommendations of the Nurse, combined with those of Mrs. Belmour; the books he had so assiduously pressed upon her,—it was impossible she could have remained so credulous and blind as not to perceive such a manner of acting involved design; and though she could never link her affections in association with one whose actions sprung not from that perfect integrity she so much revered and admired, yet when considered as the resources of love, springing from a natural diffidence of feeling, might she not excuse it?

Men were differently and variously acted upon, and however erroneous the judgment he had formed and the measures he had adopted, they had been such naturally most consonant with his ideas of attaining the object of his pursuit, that of being united to her by the connubial tie; and now that he no longer betrayed himself by hints, but had declared himself openly, how could she with justice condemn

him? Had he not paid her the most flattering compliment it was possible to do? Had he not distinguished her from her sex in general; and though she could not admit of his addresses, was she to dismiss him with disdain?

Such being her reasonings, after her past persevering resistance, could it be thought inconsistent with her usual dignity of thought, unblemished purity, and strong virtuous principles, not only to pass a less severe censure upon the former conduct of Melliphant than she had hitherto done, but in a manner even to exculpate him? Such being the case, it may be plain to perceive that the artful and specious Melliphant had in the fullest extent, by his well arranged epistle, effected his wishes. Though unable to elicit a return of affection, his appeal to her sensibility, the pity and benevolence of her feelings, had not been fruitless,—since she was led to blame herself that she felt for him no livelier sentiment than esteem.

She was about handing this packet to her mother, when recollecting the half hour must be elapsed, she hastened to put on her bonnet and mantle, and stepped to apprise her mother that she was going to Mrs. Belmour. Swiftly descending the staircase, the street-door closed after her.

As nothing could be more unpleasant to Rosilia than being obliged to leave home unattended by a companion, she walked with a hurried step. The

few streets through which she had to pass, were mostly private, but scarcely had she reached that in which her invalid friend resided, than in attempting to pass a crowd that had assembled for some purpose, she was accidentally thrown against a gentleman supported on crutches. Instantly recovering herself, she turned to apologise, when her veil being partly drawn aside by the movement, she perceived a hectic flush in the pale countenance of the stranger, who exclaimed emphatically, "charming girl!"

Rosilia started at the sound, some recollections of the past crossing her mind. Did those words signify mere gallantry? She could not so construe them, as the tenderness and benignity in the look and accent with which they were accompanied, expressed a sentiment too refined for mere common-place gallantry!

She judged rightly; the stranger was a British officer, recently wounded, and of a most interesting appearance. Though by the accident which threw Rosilia against him, he had but indistinctly viewed her countenance, he had seen sufficient to convey to his bosom a secret delight and satisfaction, from having excited the compassionate sympathy of a young and lovely female!

The next moment the crowd dispersed, and the stranger lost sight of her.

Rosilia reached the door of Mrs. Belmour in safety, and on knocking, was admitted by Melliphant himself! Pained at so unexpected a rencontre, sup-

posing him at a distant part of the town, Rosilia's first impulse was to retire, but the door was immediately closed upon her.

With a cautious and respectful air, Melliphant conducted her into a parlour, into which he followed; when, upon offering her a seat, Rosilia said, "I should be glad if Mrs. Belmour was informed of my being here. It is about the time she might expect to see me."

"I have just quitted Mrs. Belmour," returned he, "and it is by her desire that I have shown you in here; she has been truly much indisposed, and wished before she saw you to profit by a short repose; but, if you wish it, I will go and see whether at the present moment she can receive you?"

"I should be much obliged by your doing so," answered Rosilia.

Melliphant left the room under pretence of executing the commission given him, but, after remaining a short time outside the door, re-entered.

"It is as I supposed," said he; "but as I am informed her slumber seems doubtful, you may expect her summons every moment."

Not wishing immediately to betray his feelings, an interval of silence ensued, after which, in low and almost inarticulate sounds, he attempted to describe the grief into which he was plunged by the decision her parents had adopted of so suddenly leaving town. His language by degrees acquired an animated warmth and energy, extremely embarrassing to Ro-

silia, who found herself thus betrayed into an unfortunate intercourse with him, notwithstanding her late persevering efforts to avoid it: to terminate this, she rose with the intention of ringing for a servant, to learn whether she could yet see Mrs. Belmour.

Melliphant, however, rose at the same time, and, with a look and air of the most impassioned ardour, approached her. Almost unconscious of what she did, Rosilia sunk into her chair again. Why should she refuse to hear Melliphant, now that moment so critical had arrived, in which she felt it incumbent upon her to annihilate for ever his hopes? His attachment for her was now conveyed in expressions that could not be misunderstood; it was not possible for her, therefore, any longer to assume ignorance of their true meaning as she had hitherto done. She prepared herself therefore to inflict upon him one of the severest wounds he had probably ever sustained.

Her bosom throbbed violently; Melliphant perceived it, and mistaking the cause was encouraged. The agitation he witnessed, however, sprung entirely from the peculiar unpleasantness of the situation in which, for the first time in her life, she found herself placed—alone! and left to act unsupported under a circumstance so important.

She spoke—her words were scarcely audible—something like a negative met his ear, but he was not certain. Racked by contending feelings of suspense and passion, Melliphant paced the room, till Rosilia, regaining courage, and wishing to put an end

to a scene so distressing, with a voice and manner firm, yet gentle, addressed him: "Mr. Melliphant," said she, "if it will conduce to your satisfaction to learn that you possess my esteem, I will not hesitate to declare it; but as a friend only can I regard you. Believe me, I have no warmer sentiment to bestow; and even if I had I could not indulge it, since it would meet with the decided disapprobation of my family, and never could I bring myself to act in opposition to them."

Having spoken, as she thought sufficient to soften her refusal, she ceased, whilst Melliphant, not offering a reply, with a profound and thoughtful gravity stood contemplating her. The last words, as they sounded upon his ear, seemed to have implied that with the consent of her parents he might have been encouraged.

Concern for the pain she had unavoidably occasioned in delivering the sentiments of her heart, diffused a sweet and pensive languor over her countenance, whilst, unable to raise her eyes, she added,

"I wish that you could induce yourself to think that my quitting London at this period is more fortunate than otherwise. In a little time you will be restored to peace. These impressions will fade; yes, I am assured, by a slight effort, you will be enabled to forget me."

Alas! the artless Rosilia—she was ignorant that such touching language, far from soothing, only aug-

mented to the most desperate energy, the passion of Melliphant.

Giving himself up to the wildest phrenzy, he sought no longer to conceal his feelings. In frantic language, and vehement gestures, he pourtrayed to her the agony of his soul, and the despair to which he was driven. Rosilia, in affright, again precipitately rising, approached to ring the bell for the servant of Mrs. Belmour, but he seized her trembling hand in time to prevent her design.

“Cruel girl!” exclaimed he, his eyes flashing fire, and drawing a pistol from his bosom; “to what extremity do you drive me! Tremble for the consequences,” added he, in accents scarcely human; “you drive me to madness; and I am no longer master of my actions! Promise to be mine,—mine only,—my wife! or this moment shall terminate my existence; my corse will lie bleeding at your feet! Promise! say but the word, and you are instantly released!”

No sooner had he uttered these terrific sounds, and was apparently bent upon executing his horrible threat, than two men, of fierce aspect, burst open the door, one of whom advanced precipitately forward, appearing to Rosilia as hirelings employed by Melliphant to assist in bearing her away; she was about plighting irrevocably her faith, when uttering a piercing shriek, all further sense forsook her, and she sunk in a state of insensibility to the ground.

On awaking from a long and deep swoon, Rosilia cast a doubtful glance around her; but, again closing her eyes, a sense of pain, trouble, and anxiety, caused her insensibly to wish it might be permitted her never more to re-open them. As nature, however, operated towards recovery, she felt sensible that some friendly hand had been applying restoratives, and had chafed her temples, and looking up was desirous to learn to whom she was thus indebted. It was Mrs. Belmour, and her attendants, who had recalled her to existence; she sighed, and whilst pressing the hand of Mrs. Belmour, in tokens of acknowledgment, cast around a timid and inquisitive glance.

“My dear young friend,” said Mrs. Belmour, the attendants having withdrawn, “compose yourself; you have been very ill, but are now, I hope, recovering; in a short time you will be perfectly yourself again. I have not sent for Mrs. De Brooke, in the fear of alarming her.” Rosilia was about replying, but Mrs. Belmour checked her, adding, she would not listen to anything she might say until she was more recovered.

In a few minutes Mrs. Belmour continued: “Those men, who so rudely burst in upon Mr. Melliphant, it was no wonder they alarmed you. Who do you think they were? No other than bailiffs, who, according to the account they give of themselves, had traced my friend here, and to whom there is no possibility of denying admittance. Wherever their

object is to be met with, there, without ceremony, regardless of time or place, they force their way. I heard you shriek, my dear girl, and in the alarm I felt for you, forgetting my own illness, ran immediately to your assistance. Melliphant, in commending you to my care, sent for a coach, and was obliged to depart with his troublesome visitors."

Inwardly thanking the Supreme, for such an apparently divine interposition in her favour, Rosilia exclaimed, "Is then Mr. Melliphant imprisoned for debt?"

"So it appears," returned Mrs. Belmour. "I was really totally ignorant that he had cause for apprehending such an event; and I can but believe this unpleasant circumstance to arise from some little embarrassment springing from the generosity of his disposition, and from which, doubtless, his friends will soon liberate him."

The conversation was here interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. De Brooke. The bloom which had so recently faded from Rosilia's cheek, had begun to resume its seat, although the languor of her looks and air could not escape the eye of maternal solicitude; which Mrs. Belmour perceiving, related the circumstance, such as it appeared to her, and which, as the silence of Rosilia confirmed, Mrs. De Brooke did not doubt was the real statement.

CHAPTER XI.

“How hideous and forlorn! when ruthless care,
With cankering tooth corrodes the seeds of life,
And deaf with passion’s storms, when pines despair,
And howling furies rouse th’ eternal strife.”

BEATTIE.

SILENT, sad, and sullen, brooding over his past phrenzied feelings, and present desperate situation, Melliphant was conveyed by the bailiffs, in the discharge of their office, and safely placed in custody.

Left to himself, he would have been overwhelmed by all the horrors of despondency, had there not still remained for him an expedient by which he hoped to burst his fetters, and obtain his freedom ere the close of day.

He called for pen and ink, and wrote to Sir Howard. He begged of him not to delay a moment in coming to him with bail. He confided wholly upon his friendship, and abandoned himself to the hope of his timely assistance—to his exertions in behalf of his liberation; which, if not immediate, if not before the night closed in, he should not afterwards care what became of him, as existence would be intolerable. That if he did not receive a reply in reasonable time,

he could not answer for the extremity to which despair might drive him.

There are few, perhaps, so wholly lost and sunk in evil, as not to possess some latent good. Perhaps that quality which existed, in spite of the equipoise against it, in Sir Howard, was fidelity in friendship. Though of a temper avaricious and covetous, yet he never hesitated to perform, for the liberation of a friend in distress, an act of generosity. Through his zeal and activity, therefore, Melliphant was set free; and the first use he made of his liberty, was to fly to the house of Mrs. Belmour, in order to obtain accounts of Rosilia, who, some hours previously, had been conveyed home by her mother, dejected in spirits, but at the same time with a heart full of gratitude to that Power which had protected her in so trying a moment, and saved her the misery of engaging herself by an indissoluble promise, which her sense of honour would have rendered irrevocable.

It was then near ten at night, and upon receiving the desired information, Melliphant hastily left the house, to wander near that spot containing an object who had attained such an astonishing empire over his fate. He rivetted his sight upon that window, where, at the midnight hour, he had once beheld her, to him the only fair object in creation, and the only one capable of fixing his regard. Thus intensely wrapt in thought, her form more brilliant to his imagination than the starry heavens, a light glimmers in her chamber: it is she, it is she herself, he

is assured, notwithstanding the drawn curtain veils her from his sight. Unheeding all but the voice of his passion, he rushes to the door that closes her from him; he does not venture to knock, but violently pulls the bell. He listens, but all is still within. He rings again, the sound reverberates through the house, but no footstep is heard to approach. Every light appeared extinct, save that still glimmering in Rosilia's chamber.

The servants had retired to rest, with the exception of one, who was about descending the staircase to answer the bell. Fearful and tremulous, Rosilia listened over the banisters—an idea struck her it might be Melliphant. Her father opened his dressing-room, and her agitation calmed upon hearing him peremptorily forbid the servant to give admission to any one.

“If the business is urgent,” said he, “they will call again in the morning.”

Again, for the third time, the persevering Melliphant rings; he even knocks, loudly but singly. His bosom conceals a pistol, and in his hand he has placed a bribe to bestow upon the servant who should open the door, and who might contrive for him a meeting with Rosilia, that he might profit by a last resource, and finally prosecute what to him, as he conceived, the unfortunate sudden entrance of the bailiffs, had in his morning's interview prevented. Not a footstep along the hall reaches his ear, as placed to receive the sound.

To relieve at once his torturing and maddening suspense, he felt a desire to lodge within his heart the contents of that weapon he had carried about since the morning, with the intention only of frightening Rosilia into compliance with his wishes; to prove to her, by visible demonstration, that he would receive his death at her hands, unless she revoked the cruel sentence she had pronounced against him—unless she bid him live, with the promise of blessing him with herself, and raising him from the absolute misery into which he was plunged, to become at once the happiest and most favoured being in existence! The report of the pistol might reach her ear, the door might then be opened, and she would behold his corse—his bleeding corse extended before her.

He advanced a few paces, he raised his eyes to her window, the light was gone. It was Rosilia's hand which had extinguished it; she had consigned herself to her couch, to seek that repose which he felt assured was lost to him for ever.

In a state of the most insupportable agitation, he returned home, when, with a slow and melancholy pace, he measured his apartment. Wearied at length by such protracted anguish, he threw himself upon a sofa; but a posture of composure, little corresponding to the commotion of his thoughts, seemed but a mockery of his acute anguish, and he sprang from it with an impulse of frenzy. He flung himself into a seat, and pulled the table towards him; he

seized a pen, in order to pour forth on paper the violent feelings to which he was the prey.

But, again, how inadequate were words to give proportionate strength to his sentiments; overwhelmed by a torrent of impetuous thought, language indeed seemed barren. It was the first time that Melliphant had ever acknowledged its poverty.

Rising precipitately again, before the night had withdrawn its sable veil, the restless Melliphant felt himself constrained to wander a second time around the dwelling of Rosilia. They were the last moments he might ever respire near her, who was then doubtless wrapt in peaceful sleep, whilst he wandered distracted without. The morning advanced, and fearful of discovery, he quitted a spot, formerly the scene of all his happiness, but now the witness of his uncontrollable misery!

Melliphant was a man of the strongest passions, but they had never comparatively been so deeply excited as in the present instance. The changes and vicissitudes of life and fortune, in every other relation or circumstance, had been despised by him, or considered as mere casualties of but little moment. The possession of Rosilia, on the contrary, he had estimated in proportion to the fullest ardour of which his character was capable, to the obstacles which had opposed, and the incessant difficulties which had exercised his utmost wit and invention to surmount. Had he practised a conduct totally the reverse of that which induced him to make so many strenuous

efforts to appear what he really was not, had he relinquished all subterfuge and stratagem, had he acted with a perfect sincerity and uprightness, he might, with so much influence as he possessed in other respects, have succeeded better. Happily for Rosilia, that from the depraved ideas of his mind he was unfitted to form a conception of the pure and holy delights of wedded love, it terminated otherwise, and that his hypocrisy, since she could not fathom it, proved eventually the cause of his defeat.

At eight in the morning, the old travelling carriage, which, about sixteen months before had transported the De Brooke family to London, drew up at the door to convey them back to Glamorganshire. Oriana was to remain with her aunt, and Rosilia's eyes moistened at the recollection of their parting interview.

A few miles' travelling composed her, and she felt herself at length equal to relate to her parents the whole of Melliphant's proceedings, as far as they were known to or suspected by her, stating the reasons which had prevented her doing so sooner.

Mrs. De Brooke, in following her daughter's narration, trembled at the situation in which she had been placed: she could only exclaim at its conclusion, "What consummate audacity!"

"Who could have thought," added the General, "that the villain should yet have gone so far as to elude our vigilance. The last day of our stay, I had not the least supposition," added he, addressing Ro-

silia, "but that you, and your mother would have been employed at home in making preparations for your journey, my absence elsewhere having been indispensable ; and unhappily this arose from my having forgotten to caution your mother. But, too late, I discovered the real motives which influenced the great attentions I received from Sir Howard and Melliphant, perhaps in time only to have prevented ourselves from becoming completely their dupes. It was to remove my unsuspecting child from their power, that your mother consented to leave London so much before the period proposed. Dr. Lovesworth has been the kind friend watching over your real interests ; he it was who cautioned me, and sincerely told me I was wrong in admitting Sir Howard and his friend so much to the house. As to the former, he is under a singular species of infatuation, to render himself thus subservient to the plans of Melliphant. Happily, however, we have effected our escape from them, and are on the road to our peaceful dwelling. The season is advancing when Dr. Lovesworth will rejoin us, and we shall yet know some days of enjoyment, retired from the world, once again at rest, and at peace among ourselves. But of this I must warn you, Rosilia ; though remote from London, your steps may be traced ; be careful, therefore, how you trust yourself alone at any distance beyond the precincts of your home. The last words of Dr. Lovesworth, in parting from me yesterday evening, still sound upon my

ear, they were uttered in accents peculiarly emphatical, "General, take care of your daughter."

The father of Rosilia ceased to speak; and amidst the perturbed reflections that crossed her, and the idea that the good Doctor's friendly warning might have come too late, the recollection of her once singular dream rushed upon her mind, and, to her mental eye, was presented in golden characters, such as she had seen them, Beware of Mankind. Dr. Lovesworth appeared the venerable friend, and Melliphant the frightful being from whose grasp he rescued her, as if, conformably to his message, like to that of the aged sire of her dream, she was now quitting the haunts of life for those of the shade, where no regret, no hesitation intruded.

After a long pause, in which each was pursuing a train of silent reflections, Rosilia observed, "On my way to Mrs. Belmour yesterday, I met a gentleman on crutches, whom I should not probably have noticed, but for the circumstance of my being suddenly pushed against him as I passed. His face seemed familiar to me, and his accents were such as I have heard before."

"He addressed you then," remarked Mrs. De Brooke hastily.

The recollection of the flattering ejaculation he had uttered, as she caught his eye, sent again the blush to her cheek; "Nothing particular," answered she; "merely a passing exclamation occasioned by the accident."

Mrs. De Brooke was mortified to think that she

had twice become the dupe of Sir Howard, in obeying his call, and descending to the parlour to hear what was of no manner of importance, and being kept at home from accompanying her daughter to Mrs. Belmour, on account of his promised introduction to Sir Arthur Melliphant, a distant cousin it appeared of his friend, whose country seat, he said, was not far removed from the borders of Glamorgan. Such had been his tale, whether true or otherwise it was impossible for her at that moment to ascertain, not having fulfilled his engagement, sending for excuse at a late hour in the evening that he had not been able to meet with the Baronet. If it was not a fiction, she feared those men might avail themselves, the one of his relationship, and the other of his intimacy with Sir Arthur and his family, to draw near and molest them, in the retirement of their Bower. The consideration exceedingly distressed her; but never, she was determined, would she again countenance the visits of either.

Douglas we have seen rejected by Rosilia, at a time when her mind was enslaved by the tyrannical influence of opposite feelings, her reason being at variance with her affections. It was the painful disunion between those mental powers which discovered to her the fatal weakness which, with such soft and insensible steps, had stolen in upon and deprived her of happiness. When more alarmed at the intrusion of this wrong bias of her inclinations than desirous of indulging them, she formed the heroic resolve of acting

in direct opposition to their deceptive impulse. Borne away by an enthusiasm for virtue, strength of mind, and steady principles, how greatly must they have been exerted: or how else could firmness, perseverance, and self-denial have formed those bulwarks that had surrounded and fortified her. To eradicate that error, already but too deeply imbibed, to subdue and triumph over human infirmity, was indeed difficult, but to Rosilia a derogation from virtue was still more so.

How different were the feelings which swayed her in the case of Melliphant. Never had he for one moment excited in her sentiments of higher interest, of softer tendency, of nearer association, than the mere tacit consent of her reason to his claims upon her esteem; an approbation of his merits, so modestly, yet conspicuously displayed, so extolled by those around, was all she could bestow. The distress of mind, the secret sorrow, he seemed labouring under, made visible by a pensiveness of manner, sudden emotion, and half suppressed sighs, awakened in Rosilia but a tender commiseration. And even long before she suspected that she was herself the author of those sufferings, she wished, ardently wished, that she had it in her power to restore peace, happiness, and content to so apparently deserving a character; it is not surprising then that, contrary to her better prudence and judgment, her warm and generous nature should have hurried her on, with unsuspecting steps, even to the brink of that preci-

rice so long yawning to receive her, its innocent and defenceless victim !

A few days after the arrival of the De Brookes at the Bower, a letter was put into the hands of Rosilia, in the presence of her parents. She thought she knew the hand-writing, and was not deceived when with trembling hands she broke the seal and found the signature to be that of Melliphant.

His epistle was voluminous, written closely, and filling two sheets of long letter paper : he began by painting in the strongest terms the melancholy stupefaction into which her absence had plunged him ; and the imminent peril into which the strength of his passion had nearly driven him, he still shuddered to think of. He hoped that instead of condemning, she had rather vindicated and pitied him, for that fatal conduct to which an involuntary impulse, springing from despair, had abandoned him, the victim of an uncontrollable passion, of which she was the author. She could form no conception of the nature and strength of his sentiments for her, or the difficulty of surviving her refusal of him.

He then described how the anguish of his mind had induced him to haunt the place of her abode, the night previous to her departure ;—the terror he felt for the fate of his letter ;—begged an immediate answer, which if he did not receive in proper time, would cause him to follow her into Wales ;—and that he should immediately avail himself of the frequent invitations given by his relation, Sir Arthur Melli-

phant, who, together with his lady, held him in the highest estimation possible.

The letter then stated that if she would give him the least encouragement, and allow hope once more to dawn upon his mind, he should be raised from a state of the utmost despondency and misery, to become at once the happiest of men, and surmount every difficulty that might henceforth arise to oppose him; but that if, by her answer, she drove him a second time to despair, his passion, enfolded in the deepest recesses of his heart, would even there be nourished; that there it might live and feed upon his vitals, as the canker-worm does upon the author of its existence; and that after some previous arrangements in his affairs, he should fly from his native country, to seek in other regions that peace which had been denied him in his own.

Such was nearly the tenor of those impassioned lines Rosilia and her parents mutually perused; the latter launching at intervals into reproaches and invectives against the author, for his still persevering pursuit of their child; alternately censuring themselves for having so long remained in ignorance as to his real sentiments, and for having admitted his frequent visits.

Rosilia found herself in a dilemma the most perplexing, from which she knew not how to extricate herself, but by submitting her judgment entirely to the discretion of her parents; neither of whom could take upon themselves to write the desired answer,

since they were well persuaded Melliphant would not receive dismissal at their hands.

The General conceived the most effectual method to put a stop to his further persecutions, would be for Rosilia herself, in compliance with his entreaty, to pen him a reply such as, by its diction, would be calculated to extinguish in him all further hopes.

In communicating with him upon the subject, she accordingly wrote in a style which met the full concurrence of both her father and mother. Her task thus completed, she was now left to her private meditations: admitting the statement of Melliphant to be exaggerated, she had, nevertheless, been the cause, though no reproach could be attached to herself, of plunging him into sorrow. Ah! thought she, who would ever sigh for conquests? where can be the supreme felicity of reducing a fellow-being to distress, and afterwards, from vain-glorious feelings, to exult and triumph in the pain occasioned? May he speedily forget me, and regain his peace! was the ardent prayer she breathed.

Her letter had been couched in language more harsh and decided than the nature of her own compassionate and gentle feelings would have allowed, yet she felt convinced of the necessity of the measure. He will load me with reproaches, thought she; but no matter: if it enables him to forget me, the end is answered.

So deep was that veil thrown over Melliphant by his habitual vices, that had Rosilia possessed the

power of removing even its slightest windings, by which she might have gained some insight into his thoughts, views, and purposes, divested of every false coloring, she would have shrunk with horror at the appalling discovery—an exhibition of his internal deformity. That hideous sight, the unveiled human heart, would have presented a spectacle to her pure mind which would have chilled the vital current in her veins.

Melliphant in due time received that reply which, with combined feelings of anxiety and suspense, he had been daily expecting.—But having sufficiently dwelt upon the intemperate passion by which he was governed, let us proceed to other themes.

CHAPTER XII.

“ Alas! I had not render'd up my heart
Had he not loved me first.”

DRYDEN.

WE will now leave Rosilia in her sylvan retreat, enjoying the society of her parents, and that of good Doctor Lovesworth, in order to give a short retrospect of what had occurred to Oriana, previously to the late communication she had had with her sister.

For more than two years, Philimore had invariably been the beloved object of her thoughts. If ever tears had bedewed her eye, they had been occasioned by the fond recollection of Philimore. But it was not to be expected that such an intercourse could always exist in secret. Her aunt with some curiosity began at last to observe, not only the numerous letters she received, but also her ill-repressed embarrassment upon those occasions; nor, on the side of Oriana, could the change in her aunt's manners towards her escape observation; by which her situation was rendered so extremely distressing, that she conceived an anxious desire to unburthen her mind, and make to her aunt a full disclosure of all that had hitherto

passed between herself and Philimore,—to conceal nothing, either relative to the present or the future; but to do this required the permission of Philimore.

In her next letter to him she communicated her ideas upon the subject; to which he replied, that he left her to act in any way her discretion might authorize.

And now, for the first time, it occurred to her that his style was more laconic than usual, and not dictated by that fervent warmth which had ever characterised the letters of Philimore. She re-perused it, and endeavoured to force upon herself the belief that she was mistaken:—she dwelt upon every sentence,—she weighed the force of every expression. Alas! they were not as they were wont to be. She blamed herself for the request she had urged, supposing it might be that which had offended him.

She immediately wrote a second letter, couched in language the most tender, declaring the entire resignation of her will to his in every particular, and that she would not adopt any measure, or confide their mutual secret to her aunt, unless he himself should first require it. The answer which in due time returned pleased her better; the sentences were fraught with more warmth, and dissipated the fears to which the former had given rise.

Notwithstanding the increasing reserve of her aunt, Oriana, assured of Philimore's love and constancy, felt happy,—little else had power to disturb

her. But this state of pacific and resigned feeling was not of long duration. Those communications which had so long afforded her support, solace, and delight, began to decrease. The accustomed period for receiving these letters so dear to her, often passed, to leave upon her mind only the traces of disappointment. The next day came, and another succeeded, but neither proved more fortunate. Expectation, still the companion of her bosom, prevented her from giving way to absolute repining; to-morrow, she would think,—to-morrow my suspense and fears may have a cessation; but when the morrow came, it was only to cloud her brow with still more alarming perplexity.

Her patience at length exhausted, she wrote to Philimore, beseeching to know the cause of his silence,—expressing also the most affectionate concern with regard to his health; begging of him, if he valued her peace, to send her a few lines, which might prove satisfactory, and ease her of the distress under which she laboured. Perhaps, in the eloquent flow of her feelings, however tender and endearing, there might have been something of decision, some energy of expression, that might have piqued his self-love, and conveyed a reproach she fain had sought to avoid.

From whatever cause it sprang, the reply of Philimore, far from relieving, served only to probe her heart and produce still deeper agony. Why had he written, if, in so doing, he was to add only to her

misery? His silence she could have better borne, than those upbraidings for her too great poignancy of feeling: was it truly Philimore who had thus written,—he who had been wont to view her slightest qualities, words, and actions, through the magnifying medium and bright colouring of partiality? It was the hand-writing, the signature of Philimore,—but, alas! the altered sentiments his hand had traced too fatally prognosticated his heart was changed. “Why should he rebuke me,” she inwardly exclaimed, “for a too great ardency of attachment?—has he not excited it?—is he not the object of it?”

But when, in proceeding to read, she came to the passage,—“that, for his part, present circumstances proving so adverse, and destiny having so long opposed their union, he began to relinquish the idea of its being ever effected;”—Oriana could no longer doubt; conviction struck upon her mind, and an icy chill pervaded her; she sat like one motionless, absorbed in all the lethargy of woe. The idea that the love of Philimore had abated, when hers for him seemed in its plenitude, was a most severe aggravation of her misfortune.

Those vows he had pledged of never-ceasing constancy, were they all forgotten?—vows breathed forth in moments when his whole being seemed dissolving into tenderness,—moments never to return,—was it to be so? A ray, such as appears in the dawn of hope, reflected for a moment upon her benighted soul. The congeniality of their minds, talents, and

dispositions, still she was assured existed, must exist for ever; mutual sympathy alone, in despite of the contrariety of their adverse destiny, had been the cement which had knit their hearts together. So incorporated with her existence had seemed the love of Oriana for Philimore, that she had imagined it to be the same in him; and, as her natural disposition inclined her to dispel the murky clouds of sorrow, she endeavoured to imbibe consolation from the idea, that even love, arising from a pure sense of mind, might not be exempt from occasional vicissitude.

Though her supposition was by no means incorrect, yet she was far from thinking that, whilst she was blaming Philimore for his inconstancy, he, on his part, blamed her for an over-condescension,—for a deficiency in that dignity naturally to be looked for in a woman of virtue and character,—and to which, in his self-reproaches, he attributed the lengths he had been carried; and, when under ideas such as these, her influence weakened, and sometimes altogether ceased. It little entered into her reflections, that the flame of Philimore had been susceptible of decay,—because the torch of love had burnt too rapidly,—ere friendship, respect, and esteem had been rendered more secure, permanent, and complete.

If soothed for a time, as the suggestions of hope vanished, Oriana sunk into a state of still greater despondency. So much did she regret the past, that

to compose herself was impossible,—until the first impulse of despair subsiding, a calm and settled melancholy succeeded, resembling submission, but which, in fact, was sapping the foundation of her existence.

Her declining health could not pass long unnoticed by her aunt, and the concern she felt on that account revived the former apparent kindness she had borne her niece. Pleased and encouraged at finding herself restored to favor, Oriana no longer hesitated to make an avowal to her aunt of her long and secret intercourse with Philimore, stating every circumstance, with the exception of the many private meetings held at the house of their mutual friend Miss Morris, and more particularly dwelling, with tremulous emotion, on Philimore's late change of conduct.

Having finished, her aunt, as may be supposed, could not forbear manifesting some indignation, that a clandestine love affair should have been so long carried on under her roof. Somewhat appeased, however, by the pleadings and intercessions of her niece, added to the confidence she then, though at so late a period, reposed in her, she was inclined to pass it over.

Oriana also submitted, for her aunt's perusal, all the letters she had received from Philimore, which, with the exception of a few of later date, invariably portrayed the warm effusions of his soul; combining sentiments calculated to enlarge the understanding

and improve the heart. In returning the letters, Mrs. Arden used such arguments as she thought might best allay the sorrow of Oriana.

“ You must endeavour, my dear,” said she, “ to cast this Philimore from your thoughts, unhappily too long engrossing them ; and, however apparently worthy of them in the beginning of your attachment, at the present proving himself by no means so. Try to recover, and be yourself again. It is but to make the effort, and believe me, that which, in the present state of your wounded feelings, you think so exceedingly grievous, will, if you allow yourself calmly to reflect upon it, appear altogether in another light. This unfortunate partiality you have entertained, I see plainly now, is that alone which has stood between you and Frederick Valpée in his late visit here. I fear, by his abrupt departure, he may conceive you have been playing the coquette. Mr. Arden and myself have been at a loss to know to what cause to attribute such coolness in your conduct as you manifested towards him ; it was certainly calculated to mar your real interests ; but since the truth is discovered, I would advise you, when next Mr. Valpée comes, should he be prevailed on to renew his visits here, to receive him with more unequivocal testimony of your esteem.”

Oriana tacitly acknowledged the truth of all her aunt had advanced. Frederick Valpée was truly much regarded by her. Had her thoughts been undecided,—had Philimore never proffered her his

affections,—Valpée would inevitably have filled that place in her heart, then so deeply occupied by the now inconstant Philimore.

Valpée, a perfect connoisseur in the art of music, had often, in his invitations to the Park, sent his flute; and in its accompaniments to her piano or harp, hung over her delighted by the harmonious sounds it produced. She herself, also, had felt the charm; and, forgetful of Philimore and his prior claims, had unconsciously indulged in the playful raillery and agreeable vivacity inspired by the moment, until conscience would whisper that she was the affianced bride of another.

By degrees such a restriction weakened; and though, to do her justice, her heart with its affections might have been firm and constant to its vows, yet ever absent from their object, the jocund turn of her disposition led her indiscriminately to indulge in her humour. Thus, from the repartee and wit of which she was mistress, arose a fondness for the company of the other sex, and she never could deny herself the gratification of endeavouring to attract their attention. With regard to Valpée, while this prevailing desire lay hidden from herself, she felt a wish he would make her an offer of his hand, which in refusing, thought she, will be more highly estimated by Philimore; and what an indubitable proof shall I give him of my preference,—my unalterable and exclusive partiality! She hoped also, if such an offer and refusal should occur, it would be the means

of bringing him to a more decided and immediate result.

Valpée, however, had not made up his mind to address her, having without any such *éclaircissement* returned to his paternal seat; when the thoughts of Oriana, as usual, became wholly centred in Philimore. If betrayed by him, how wretched would become her existence! Alas! at the moment of such a reflection, she trod upon the brink she dreaded.

Her mortification and disappointment we have already described. Sensibly touched by the renewed kindness of her aunt, the confidence she had reposed in her proving so much more fortunate than she had dared to anticipate; she determined on communicating to Philimore the step she had taken, judging that, as it so essentially regarded him, it might tend to revive his fading hopes. As a last effort, she would try to rekindle in his heart a latent spark of the affection he had vowed for her, perhaps not yet wholly extinct.

Having sent her letter, she trembled for its fate! She scarcely allowed herself to hope, seeming as if on its issue depended the happiness or misery of her future life. It might restore her Philimore, or deprive her of him for ever! When labouring under the acute and painful feeling of suspense, thought seems ever active to multiply and aggravate every detail that may still farther oppress the heart. And thus was it with Oriana.

During the time, however, that must unavoidably elapse ere she could receive an answer, she employed her mind in reviewing, as far as she was enabled, with an impartial judgment, every part of her conduct from the first early dawning of her attachment to the present unfortunate moment. If she had indulged in gaiety or even raillery with others, it had never estranged her heart from him to whom she had betrothed herself. Thus, though she could find no positive cause for censuring her own conduct as far as it related to Philimore, she yet would, if possible, have willingly justified his by every suggestion in her power.

She had ever evinced the utmost generosity and candour towards him; never had she either disguised or concealed her sentiments; he had shared in all her tenderest emotions and dearest wishes; no maxim of a cold-hearted prudence had restrained her; she had poured forth her feelings before him in their fullest extent, and had ventured, without reserve, to tell him how much he was beloved! Alas! thought she, a greater caution in the development of my feelings might have secured me his permanent regard.

The injured virtuous, in the extremity of woe, have still one consolation left, derived from the reflection that their sufferings are unmerited. As to her undiminished constancy, Oriana felt that she was irreproachable; she bitterly, however, condemned herself for the want of self-control,—for the little

resistance she had practised in abandoning herself to the implicit guidance, direction, and honor of the man she loved, supposing him altogether incapable of error. She trembled as the retrospect of past scenes rushed upon her mind,—at the ruin and desolation they might have involved, in consequence of allowing herself to be swayed by Inclination, unsanctioned by Duty, reason, or judgment. And this was the nature of her reflections: “The loss of Philimore, so cherished by me, is the chastisement which Providence inflicts for the deception I have practised on my parents!”

After a due interval, the reply of Philimore was received. With a beating heart Oriana fled to her apartment, there in secret to ascertain her doom,—to learn whether Philimore would once again bestow on her the sweet soothings of consolation and of hope; or whether, indeed, he was lost to her for ever! She broke the seal, and her eyes, though nearly dim with emotion, traced those well-known characters, but no longer, as formerly, were they pressed to her lips, or folded upon her bosom.

Short was the epistle, and, like the preceding ones, redolent of indifference. “He saw no prospect of an alliance, and, therefore, urged her to resign herself to the decrees of that Providence, whose ways, though inscrutable, are merciful and just.” But why was no kindred feeling of sympathy or regret mingled with his exhortations,—so cold,—so laconic;—saying nothing of himself, or of his health,—and

expressing no concern or interest in the communication she had made to her aunt?

Such was the cool reply of Philimore to the unhappy Oriana, whose affections had been all in all to him, and which he once would not have exchanged for a mitre or a diadem!

CHAPTER XIII.

And oft with sweet celestial grace,
Soft as the gentle dove,
She gazed upon the infant face
With tenderness and love.

Anonymous.

IN the rich bloom of life, ere the heart has made its selection, ere it acknowledges one object the sole partner of its joys and pains, the central sphere of all its hopes, wishes, and fond vibrations; ere the blessed period, when the happy conjugal tie is formed, and the young, tender, and sensitive female feels that she lives but for herself alone; or, if indeed not so wholly insulated, if amidst the regards and lively interest of her kindred; still she will repine until her soul meets with its one dear associate—life will pass away tedious and irksome.

Though doomed to the sameness of solitude, a well-cultivated mind discovers in its own resources an infinite fund of amusement; it may soar in the regions of imagination, taste, and sentiment. The mild voice of religion also whispers, that a placid spirit is to be obtained by resignation, and the mind for a time submits: but wearied at last, it becomes sunk and exhausted by its very efforts to regain composure.

An unvaried monotony of existence is the reign of desolation. Age, infirmity, sickness, or adversity, may detach the affections from the love of society; but never, in the bloom of youth, in the spring of our days; never, where the natural inclination for sociability is strong, can the will become so resigned to its destiny, as to be happy under a privation so severe. Every better feeling of our nature rises up to oppose it—warmth of temperament, benevolence, tenderness, and affection.

In this state of mind week after week passed over Rosilia at the Bower.

The usual season had commenced when Dr. Lovesworth visited his Hermitage. Fond of country diversions and exercise, Rosilia was happy to avail herself of the occasion; and often when her parents were indisposed to leave home, she accompanied him in his rambles. It was in one of these excursions he informed her that the health of Philimore was in a dangerous state, so much so, that his medical attendant conceived his life precarious. Rosilia heard the news with alarm and dismay, for should such fears be verified how would her sister support the shock?

“For this amiable young man,” continued the Doctor, “I have felt nearly the affections of a father; and should it please Providence to call him from us, I shall grieve for him as a parent would for a favourite son. Nevertheless, though it is with pain I see his dissolution approaching, I would not pro-

long his existence; so much has my young friend had to combat with, so few have been his enjoyments, that his longer sojourn amongst us would serve but to extend instead of shortening the term of his miseries. With what delight have I witnessed the never-ceasing industry and moral rectitude with which he has conducted himself during the whole progress of his professional career! To his cultivated talents, had interest been conjoined, success would infallibly have attended him; but, I am sorry to say, merit alone, devoid of friends and fortune, is insufficient for advancement. Though his abilities, however, were left to languish, he had always the power of attracting numerous hearers to his discourses. At the last at which I was present,—and, perhaps, it was the last he will ever deliver,—it seemed, in his zeal for the cause of truth, that whilst his mortal frame was descending to the earth, his spirit was soaring to that eternity, the beatitudes of which he could so well describe.”

The Doctor paused, and Rosilia, herself in tears, perceived by his altered voice that he was deeply affected.

“It has sometimes forcibly occurred to me,” continued he, after a while, “that Philimore has long since laboured under some secret and weighty affliction. I have tried to awaken his confidence in that respect, but never could succeed, although his disposition is unreserved, and free in communication; I have thence thought, that his virtuous soul might

be combating with an unhappy but unconquerable attachment to some one worthy of him, whom he would not reduce to indigence. I have often inwardly conjectured that this object might be your sister; and, if so, Philimore, indeed, must have severely struggled to bring himself to renounce a woman so accomplished; rather than by making her his own, reduce her to a level with his humble fortunes."

Rosilia replied not. Much as it was contrary to her character to act with deception, and much as she esteemed her venerable friend, who, whilst he spoke, had fixed upon her his penetrating eye; yet it was not for her to betray a confidence reposed in her, or reveal a secret concerning Philimore, who had not himself thought proper to divulge it.

"That secrets are a sacred trust,
That friends should be sincere and just,
That constancy befits them."

Her drooping head, however, and the deepening hue of her cheeks, might have bore ample evidence to the Doctor that he had not been mistaken. He, however, changed the conversation to subjects various and edifying, while Rosilia looked upon him as the pattern of all goodness.

What can equal that calm delight of which the mind is sensible, when it rests in confidence, assimilates in thought, and looks for lessons of instruction from a being fraught with the highest intelligence; a being who, aspiring to the skies, feels no other tie so valu-

able as that of rendering himself useful to his fellow-mortals ;—who in every instance disregards and sacrifices his own interests, to render himself serviceable to another ;—who, in the short span of life, crowds into it all the good in his power ;—who, in denying himself, follows the dictates of the gospel, whose disciple he is ;—and whose heart expands with universal compassion, benevolence and love, the spring of all his actions ? Such was Doctor Lovesworth ; and Rosilia loved, esteemed, and revered him, because such was his character.

Having extended their walk beyond their usual boundary, in the circuit they made towards home, they accidentally missed their way. Fatigued, and wishing to repose themselves, they were pleased, on perceiving at no great distance a humble, but beautifully picturesque cottage, situated upon the declivity of a hill, surrounded on all sides by tufted beauties. Upon approaching nearer, they observed at the door a young woman of rustic, but neat appearance, holding in her arms a child of soft and lovely mien, upon whom she was lavishing her fond caresses. The flush of health was on her cheek, and the glow of pleasure in her eye, as she fondly caressed the playful innocent in her arms. Rosilia could have snatched from her the sweet babe, and wished she had been the nurse.

Beckoning to the young woman, the Doctor expressed a desire to rest awhile in her humble abode, and was cheerfully welcomed. The child, which wa-

about two years old, dropped from its hand a glittering toy, bestudded with valuable gems; Rosilia, in hastening to restore it, sought at the same time to embrace the infant, which clung the closer to its nurse; but won by Rosilia's encouraging smile and accent, it soon nestled in her bosom.

“What a sweet child!” said she to the young woman; “you are, doubtless, the mother; and yet there is no resemblance.

“I am but her nurse,” replied the young woman; “but I love her as much as if she were my own.”

The child, stretching forward, playfully sought to seize Rosilia's flowers, who, forming them into a wreath, decked the head of the “sweet little cherub.” In beginning to give articulation to sounds, she frequently lisped the word “papa,” which still further increased the curiosity of Rosilia: the Doctor having engaged the nurse in conversation, she addressed herself to an old infirm woman who sat in a corner of the cottage, employed at her spinning-wheel, and requested to be informed who had the happiness of being mother to so lovely a child. She was answered, that the child had been brought to the cottage by her daughter, a few months since, in company with a lady, whose name she did not recollect. The lady was not the child's mother, nor even any relation, being sister merely to the child's god-mother; but both seemed to take a great interest in it, adding that they would not have entrusted so precious a charge with her daughter, had they not

known her to be in every way worthy of confidence, and as well-behaved a girl as any in the neighbourhood:—that when the lady came to see the child, she often wept over her; and was sometimes heard to say, she feared the dear innocent would become an orphan.

“And where does the lady live?” inquired Rosilia.

“About thirty miles off.”

“Alas! and is there then a possibility that this lovely little creature may become parentless?” exclaimed Rosilia, while continuing to lavish her caresses upon the object of her sympathy.

Dr. Lovesworth felt sorry to terminate so engaging a scene, and would have gladly prolonged it had not his watch told him it was time to consign Rosilia to her parents, who might be then suffering uneasiness from her having exceeded the usual period of her absence. He therefore raised the child from her lap, and impressing a benign salute upon its glowing cheek, delivered it back to the arms of its nurse. Rosilia then left the cottage with many assurances of renewing her visit. The chief topic of her discourse was the inmates of the cottage until she arrived at the Bower; when the subject was renewed, and the parents of Rosilia felt happy that she had discovered so pleasing a source of amusement.

Seldom did she suffer a day to pass without visiting the interesting child. Sometimes the nurse brought her to the Bower, when the General and

Mrs. De Brooke, equally with Rosilia, were charmed with her playful endearments. Rosilia's skill at her needle was often exerted in ornamenting her little frocks and caps; and thus beguiled, she did not find the time pass with such monotony as formerly.

Notwithstanding this new resource for the occupation of her mind, she yet deeply felt the absence of her excellent friend, the good Dr. Lovesworth, who was called upon to quit his Hermitage; but more so on account of the melancholy cause which had recently drawn him away. He had received a letter from the father of Philimore of a nature truly distressing, calculated to excite his fears respecting the safety of his young friend. The physicians having pronounced him in imminent danger, Mr. Philimore, the unhappy father, had insinuated how greatly his presence would afford consolation to his son.

Conceiving it, therefore, the last act of friendship he might have it in his power to perform towards that superior young man, and brother minister, the Doctor delayed not to depart immediately for London.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ Oft bursts my soul beyond the bounds of life.”

YOUNG.

PHILIMORE had often heard from General De Brooke of the merits of Frederick Valpée ; he had also heard of his frequent visits to the Park, as sanctioned by Mrs. Arden, and even approved of by Oriana. Flattered by the prospect of so eligible a connection in his family, the General had conceived that by openly speaking of it to Philimore, it might give decided discouragement to his hopes respecting his daughter Oriana, if he had formed any, which, from various circumstances, the General strongly suspected to be the case.

In order, however, to assure himself of no prior influence existing over the affections of Oriana, he thought proper to have a private conference with Philimore upon the subject ; in which, without ceremony or preface, he asked him in direct terms whether he had not entertained views of an union with his eldest daughter, wishing to be informed of the circumstance with the candour and integrity becoming the character of a gentleman. Taken off his guard by a question so abrupt, yet, at the same

time, not in the least equivocating, viewing deeply the consequences and unpleasant effects that might arise were he to reply by an affirmative, he hesitated not to give a positive denial, asserting that such an idea had never entered his thoughts. "Without church preferment, General," added he, "how could I think of marriage?"

"Not, possibly, under your present circumstances," rejoined the General; "but I had reason for supposing, whilst in anticipation of better fortune, some understanding had taken place between you and my daughter."

"None, I can assure you, General."

"It is enough," added he, when rising to depart, he extended his hand in token of amity, fully satisfied as to the result of his visit.

Philimore is too honourable to have deceived me, thought the General; the sacredness of his profession also would not have allowed him to do so.

Few there are who would not, like the General, have thought the same;—so blind is human sight, that what often appears to man clear and convincing, nevertheless remains hidden, save to Him whose eye alone can penetrate the secret windings of the heart.

Philimore, in the most unequivocal manner, had belied himself; those lips that had ever breathed forth exhortations concerning the beauty of Truth, could yet derogate from its practice. "And why," he asked himself, in reviewing his words, "why should I have said otherwise? Though contemning falsehood,

may there not be certain cases involving effects of an import to render it excusable, if not justifiable? To what purpose would have been the avowal of my past attachment, existing so long in secret, since, as is most probable, its promised end, that of marriage, will never be realized? Why, therefore, have aggravated or afflicted the General's mind by a confession of the truth? Would it have changed the present, or prevented the results arising in the future? would it have lightened my misery? Besides, could I have been justified in setting at variance our respective families, so long united in the bonds of peace and friendship? The General has left me satisfied, contented, happy! I alone am the sufferer, I alone have erred—and now pay the forfeit of my error."

Though by this reasoning Philimore acquitted himself of any wilful intention of wrong, it was not so easy for him to dismiss those painful intrusions which often stole upon him and embittered his peace. "Can it be possible," thought he, "that she who has allowed herself to be carried so far by me, can admit of the attentions of another?" As this afflicting idea gathered strength by recurrence, he began to think Oriana was not so innately virtuous as he had once thought her; that easiness of access which, in the beginning of his flame, he had supposed to originate in candour, he then imagined owed its birth to laxity or lightness of principle. Why encourage the attentions of Valpée? Was it not evident she did so—had not her father given him confirmation of it? What

signified her professions of eternal affection to himself!—he had held but that share in her heart another might equally have done, provided he had tendered her an offer of his hand!

Depressed in mind and enfeebled in constitution, the repose he had formerly derived from a calm conscience by degrees forsook him. In looking forward to the future, each fair prospect fading from his view presented but a sterile and desolated waste. When he reflected how little he might reasonably indulge in the persuasion of ever accomplishing an union with Oriana, every flattering image vanished; hope seemed to wander; all seemed as but a passing dream, which had arisen to mock him! The delusion attending on terrestrial joys bewildered his thoughts. Thus a species of inanity was engendered, which produced in him a perfect indifference to every object around him.

To such sad and mournful contemplations was often united the bitter sting of compunction, of humiliation, the loss of self-esteem, and which gave to his letters to Oriana that melancholy and moroseness of style of which she had so much complained. His flame was decaying nearly to extinction, and his correspondence thence became less frequent, until at last it ceased altogether; inwardly persuaded,—but how unjustly!—that the affection of Oriana was wholly withdrawn from him, and was transferred to Valpée—the more fortunate, prosperous, and happy Valpée.

Influenced by such ideas, the name of Oriana,

once so dear to him, was then never breathed from his lips, never sounded on his ear, but it brought with it the most excruciating throb to his heart. His wishes were to forget, if possible, that she had ever lived for him. Viewing the subject in this light, he considered himself as a beacon to the unwary to avoid running into the indulgence of passion!

Time thus crept on; when, as if awaking from some harassing dream, how sudden was the surprise of Philimore!—Valpée no longer frequented the Park; he was gone; he was no longer basking, the favoured lover, in the smiles of Oriana! Had she refused him? had she declined his offered hand? was it for him, for his sake, she had thus acted?

Such were the ejaculations of Philimore, whilst the conviction stole upon him how much he had wronged her. But though the memory of former joys in part revived, and with it the charm her letters, full of lively repartee and tender sentiment, had conveyed, yet in those moments of apprehension and remorse which frequently stole over his mind, he accused himself of having seduced away her affections, of having stolen her from her family, and of having marred the lustre of her worldly interests, if not her happiness. But for him, alas! she might have been the honoured, the cherished, and the admired bride of Valpée, whose merits and worth he had heard so highly extolled!

Frequent attacks of the pleura rendered his life

doubtful, and he wisely considered, that did mortality overtake him sooner than he might be aware of, to what would Oriana be exposed—admitting her fidelity to him existed in that fulness her language had painted! In the idea that it might be so, how acute was the anguish thus conveyed! how greatly did he lament that he had not in the earlier stage of his attachment exercised over his affections and inclinations a due command, ere he had involved the destiny of the hapless Oriana with his own! Had he during that fatal season of health and strength, hope and joy, made a timely sacrifice of his feelings, and not have allowed their bright infatuation to dazzle his judgment, what a weight of misery would have been averted, not more from Oriana than himself!

In such afflicting reproaches day succeeded to day, and scarcely was a smile seen to illumine the countenance of the wan and faded Philimore. How truly did the words of the poet apply to his peculiar case, “Day followed day, and night the night: our life is but a chain of many deaths”! A lethargic indolence took possession of him; his studies were neglected; and he who had been remarked for the order and neatness of his apparel, the circumspection of his habits, and agreeable cheerfulness of manners, stood a monument of woe! no trace of his former self visible; constantly pursuing the same unmeaning, dull, monotonous round; half the day in a negligent dishabille; sad and silent; filling always the same seat, in the same corner, occupied apparently with a

book, whilst in truth his mind was far absent from its contents, ruminating over his sorrows,—those of Oriana,—the unhappy lot to which he had reduced her, so forcibly described in those letters, the tender anxiety for his health, and apprehensions of his lost affections, had drawn from her pen.

In his self-condemnation, Oriana had borne her share, for the yielding disposition she had shown him; but though, no longer accusing her of favouring Valpée, she was comparatively restored to his favourable estimation, yet how could he renew his correspondence, and answer her letters in the manner she wished?—having already discouraged her affections, how could he persuade himself to revive hopes which would assuredly prove fallacious? It was a consideration of moment, and the reflection he gave to it decidedly marked out the plan he should in future adopt, but which, if carried into effect, must indeed harrow up his soul; and hence he invoked the Deity for strength and resolution to enable him with consistency to pursue it.

Feeling as he did a deep sense of compassion for the situation of Oriana, brought upon her by himself, dire necessity urged him to the dreadful sacrifice of extinguishing in her breast the love she bore him; he must endeavour to persevere in that cruel coldness he had already shown; by an affected indifference he must give rise in her to a supposition of his inconstancy, and unworthiness of being linked with her in the bonds of conjugal union! Dictated by such dark,

cheerless, and solitary meditations were those epistolary replies to Oriana which had so much tortured and aggrieved her.

“When, in imagining herself no longer beloved,” thought he, “she will have exhausted the first tumult of grief, pride and indignation will proportionately arise and diminish the strength of her attachment; for few are the women who, like her, can in reality, when put to the trial, bend to the vicissitudes of life. She will doubtless experience some agonizing throbs, but she will regain her wonted spring; content, gaiety, and happiness will again be hers. Were I, as formerly, to express myself in the glowing language of love, and were I to paint my real state,—a prey to sorrow, a frame fast verging to the grave,—here, in this chamber, should I constantly behold her, friends, family, the opinions of the world, all, all contemned for my sake; no power could restrain her. I that know her heart, can judge of her actions, can behold her as she is, the creature of impulse! I should have the misery of seeing her falling hourly a victim to the passion which my selfishness sought to inspire her with. Oh! what a trial to darken still more heavily the latter moments of my life! If any solace can arise to me henceforward, it will be in the consciousness of having done my duty—done what I could, and all that remained for me to do, while an inhabitant of this earth, that of sparing Oriana the prolongation of a deeper grief, and that of restoring her to herself and to her family! Ere that moment

when these conflicts, combats, and denials to which my frame is unequal, when death will have closed the scene of my mortal existence,—ere that moment Oriana will have ceased to attach interest to my name, she will have ceased to love, to think, or speak of Philimore !”

Thus under the strict fulfilment of a *duty* so severe, but which he conceived incumbent upon him to retrieve the past, Philimore insensibly became detached from his miseries, the ties of earth slackened, and his thoughts often soared to rest upon the substantial realities of another life. Such exalted moments, however, could not at that time endure without occasional relapses into sorrow ; but as they principally arose from a contemplation of past error, in connection with Oriana, while all of material enjoyment vanished from his view, those of a higher, more interior, and unearthly character succeeded, and gained the ascendancy in his mind.

His correspondence with Oriana had totally ceased, yet after some period had thus elapsed, he felt the most ardent desire to renew it,—to pour into her bosom those new, sacred, and powerful feelings which influenced him ; to make her a participator in those sublime thoughts so frequently engrossing him ; to communicate with her in a style of sentiment, idea, and reflection wholly different from the past ; to hear her in return express the language of patient submission and resignation to the Deity.

An intercourse so free from passion, so pure and

celestial, would have bestowed upon him one of the greatest indulgences his soul was then capable of receiving, suspended as it was between the separate atmospheres, visible and invisible, by an equilibrium so slight. To see her, to enjoy her presence the short time it was permitted him to live, was again one of the dearest wishes upon which his affections dwelt.

Alas! such a blessing he must forgo! That which in other circumstances would have infused delight into his soul, he must, under this fatal dispensation of Providence, reject,—and reject with all the appearance of harsh and cold indifference! He must conceal from her even that which would tend to vindicate and justify him in her eyes! He must conceal from her the gradual dissolution of his frame! all that would renovate her past sympathy and affection! The task thus begun, however difficult, must be yet consistently pursued; he must be contented to appear unfeeling, ungrateful, selfish, in order to teach Oriana the useful and practical lesson of suppressing those impulses, arising but as exhalations from her natural affections, which, if not duly subjugated to the will of the Supreme, might in the end prove in her destructive to the confirmation of more essential, steady, and lasting principles.

Such being the views by which he was then actuated, if, from flattering incitements operating upon his warm temperament, he had been betrayed from the strict path of rectitude, he retraced it with the

most fervent, contrite, and pious zeal. The most profoundly religious principle and a desire of repairing the past, could alone have given stimulus to such a line of conduct as the one Philimore so sublimely formed, to sever those links formerly uniting him to her—the chosen and beloved friend of his heart. And here the man we first described returns upon the view in the full saintly energy of his character, the internal principle bearing rule and governing every inferior one ; bringing subjection and obedience into that order which stamps upon the soul, as it were, its Maker's seal ; proves it to be immortal,—a form and substance born for the inheritance of eternal bliss in the regions above.

In one of Oriana's visits to London with her aunt, she was accidentally made acquainted with the declining health of Philimore, and though all communication with him had long since ceased, and she had succeeded in reconciling her mind in some degree to it, yet she could not, in that trying hour to himself and family, deny herself the consolation of calling at his house. Her wishes being expressed, her aunt, who did not desire to oppose her, set her down at the corner of the street leading to the abode of the Philimores, telling her she would call to take her up again upon her leaving town. Oriana had thus a few precious hours at her disposal, and profited by them in the manner we are about to relate.

For the first time for months she knocks for admittance at that house where she had formerly spent

some of the happiest moments of her life. No longer the voice of content, pleasure, and gaiety breathed in the enlivening glee or spontaneous laugh; no sound of former merriment meets her ear; all within is silent, still, and sad. She is shown by a servant, whose countenance wears the aspect of sorrow, into that parlour where the family had been wont to assemble, and greet her with the tones of welcome. What a foreboding contrast! no one was then visible! She seats herself in melancholy expectation of the coming of Mrs. Philimore, who, upon entering, extends her hand as usual, and though clouded by grief, kindness beams from her countenance.

After a painful pause, Oriana tremblingly asks after the invalid. The mother's reply faithfully portrayed the real state of her son, and extinguished every hope of his recovery; the doubt being only as to whether the awful summons were near or distant.

Oriana felt influenced by the strongest desire once again to behold Philimore; and yet she scarcely dared suggest the wish. The mother, as if by intuitive anticipation, said in rising, "I will tell Edmund you are here; it might cheer and revive him to behold one whom—" but without stopping to finish her speech she retired, and the agitation of Oriana redoubled at every instant.

Might there exist a possibility of refusal she dreaded to think of. Contrary, however, to this suggestion which had obtruded itself, Mrs. Philimore advanced to meet her, and, with a smile of satisfac-

tion, said that Philimore rejoiced to hear of her being in the house, and awaited her coming with a pleasure she had not witnessed in him during a period of many months.

What were the mutual feelings of either, when Philimore and Oriana met, after all that had passed between them, may be easier conceived than described. Philimore attempted to rise, feeble and languid; the effort seemed beyond his strength; upon perceiving which, to prevent his further exerting himself, Oriana sprang forward, and they were instantaneously clasped in each other's arms.

Vainly endeavouring to stifle her emotions, when disengaged from the embrace of Philimore, Oriana sunk into a chair and wept. Philimore wept also; but it was the soul that wept, and such tears, whensoever shed, spring not from human weakness, but from causes infinitely more profound and exalted.

Worn by the mental struggle so long sustained, added to the incessant and intolerable suffering his frame underwent, Philimore exhibited to the eyes of Oriana but the spectre of his former self. Forgetful of his injurious treatment, the wrongs she had endured, the grief that had consumed her, compassion was then the sole feeling that absorbed her. Mild, kind, and benign had ever been the expression of Philimore's countenance, but there was now shed a ray around him such as rarely adorns humanity; it impressed upon Oriana's mind the conviction that his spirit was passing away to realms more in har-

mony with its state than it was possible this lower one could ever henceforward be to him. The time was when, had such an idea entered her mind, it would have been torture indescribable and agony the most intense ; but then, subdued as was the usual warmth of her temperament, an awful suspension seemed to hold her feelings in control.

Never had she breathed a reproach to Philimore for his late apparent unkindness towards her, yet her heart having tacitly done so, she then in the same silent language accused herself of having listened to its dictates. Overwhelmed by a sense of inferiority, while before one whose presence seemed almost supernatural, she not only acquitted him, but was active also in justifying him.

“ Edmund,” said she, with streaming eyes and a voice scarcely audible, “ tell me how or in what way I have offended you.”

“ Never, my Oriana!” he exclaimed, deeply touched on his part, “ never ! you have never offended me, nor aught diminished in my estimation from the first moment I beheld you.”

He paused ; he essayed to explain himself. A few broken sentences was all he uttered, and it was all she required. Those few words spoke volumes to satisfy her, and to compose her ; she blessed her Philimore—she invoked heavenly blessings upon his head. The shortness of his breathing, the acute anguish he was enduring, seemed to render explanation doubly painful, and she entreated him to say no

more. He had said sufficient to assure her of the justness of his proceedings, and the religious principles by which he had regulated his conduct in this instance. That interview, so dearly wished for on both sides, continued without interruption until Oriana was summoned to attend her aunt.

Mr. and Mrs. Philimore had never remained wholly blind to their son's attachment; and though from the maternal indulgence of the latter she might have given it her sanction, her wish to do so was repeatedly checked by the absolute discountenance it met with from her husband; and this opposition from his father being well known to Philimore, presented a difficulty which rendered secrecy the more important; when therefore, from the increasing wasting of his frame, he felt assured reserve might be dispensed with for the future, he informed his father of every circumstantial detail attending the infancy, rise, and progress of his attachment; when, alas! the past being beyond the power of paternal solicitude to recall, the most bitter regrets accompanied the reflections of the unhappy sire.

CHAPTER XV.

“ Wrapt in the thought of immortality,
Wrapt in the single, the triumphant thought.”

YOUNG.

MRS. ARDEN during the fine season generally appropriated one day in the week for visiting town, which afforded Oriana a very convenient and desirable opportunity of seeing Philimore, and thus of faithfully fulfilling her promise, being regularly at each stated period set down at the corner of the street leading to his residence.

It was thus permitted Oriana to trace in its progress each gradual symptom of her lover's disease, until it assumed the last stage of decline. As the shades of night chase and obscure the light of day, she had seen his form passing away from the earth,—but as the renewed morn, as the sun in the glorious East, to rise again in a brighter and never-changing sphere ; —the fair perspective serenely beaming on the mental vision of a soul impressed with virtue !

It was in one of these moments,—calm, yet solemn,—that Oriana paid her expected visit, and gave to Philimore the delight of seeing her, when his spirit, though composed, tranquil and resigned, free from this world's intrusive thoughts, yet beheld with

pain the time pass by that was to deprive him of her presence. His affections—ever devotional—then seemed to fix themselves more intensely upon the Supreme Ruler of all things; next to which Oriana might hold her empire. At those periods when, as usual, awaiting the summons of her aunt, Philimore invariably placed his watch before him, and whilst tracing its movements, counting every second as it passed, looked alternately upon Oriana; his eyes sunken, yet soft and lustral in their glances, full of interest and affectionate concern for her.

During one of those intervals of indulgence to Philimore, Dr. Lovesworth, in accordance with the accounts he had received from Mr. Philimore, happened to arrive, and to be admitted into the apartment, where in a large elbow chair, pale and emaciated, reclined his loved young friend; Oriana, the amiable and affectionate Oriana, fair, fragile, delicate, seated by his side, a picture of patient grief. Philimore had taken his watch from the table, and held it in his hand: how quickly seemed the minutes to advance over the dial! It wanted but a quarter of an hour of the time when Oriana must leave him, perhaps never more in this world to behold her. No sooner had he made the sorrowful reflection, than the door opening, presented to his confused sight Dr. Lovesworth.

“My revered friend!” was all he could say, extending his thin and almost nerveless hand, which the Doctor took and pressed with ardour; his coun-

tenance expressed a calm benignity, while his words spoke peace and consolation.

A carriage stops; the sound of footsteps advance: it is the signal for Oriana to depart. The language of Philimore's sunken eye, as it turned upon her, pierced her to the soul. In attempting to rise, she tottered, and was obliged to reseat herself. Inexpressibly touched, Philimore, in a faint voice, said, "My Oriana, we part but to meet again—in—in Heaven!" A saintly smile, as if already in that blessed abode, re-illumined his countenance. It re-assured the drooping Oriana. The urgency of the moment required the greatest exertion of her courage.

She rose to leave him; Philimore sighed, and raising her lily hand, pressed it fervently upon his lips.

"Go, my best-beloved!" he added; "I will not detain you; may Heaven bless and protect you from every pain and sorrow!"

His eyelids closed, as if in the act of silent prayer. By an involuntary motion, the head of Oriana sunk upon that of Philimore, and after pressing awhile her cheek upon his pale forehead, she suffered herself to be led from the apartment.

Dr. Lovesworth seated himself in the vacant chair, and attempted not to interrupt the pause—that sacred pause, as it were, reigning after she was gone. Aroused by the pain his cough occasioned him, Philimore raised his head, and beheld by his side that inestimable friend, whose name he had so often

repeated. Amidst the sufferings he endured, what a consolatory balm did that friend afford him !

“ Dear Dr. Lovesworth,” said he, “ I thank you most cordially for your constant kind attentions to me, and particularly for this present one, the benevolent motive which has urged your coming to see me. When we last parted I was much out of health, perhaps more so than you, in common with my other friends, might believe ; and you formed no supposition that when we next met you would find me so near my end—even on the brink of eternity.”

These words were spoken in a voice so firm, so free from human weakness, that Dr. Lovesworth instantly perceived the heart of his young friend was where it ought to be. It may be well supposed that the Doctor in his reply mingled the warmth of friendship with the piety and zeal of the true Christian, and yet maintained a hope, a possibility that the thread of life was not wholly spun.

“ At present,” resumed Philimore, “ it is more uneasiness I feel than acute pain ; experience however of the past holds out no favourable expectation, and leaves me but patience as a principal support, and which I hope to be favoured with an increasing share of as the exigences may require ; at the same time I do not wish, my good Doctor, that you should deceive yourself ; that blessed moment which will release me from all earthly cares is nearer at hand than you imagine ; and as the time permitted me to see and speak to you is but short, I wish to

unburthen my soul to you of some of its weightiest feelings.”

“There is no balm so salutary,” replied the Doctor, “as that which I am convinced you are in possession of—and which I conceive is at this day possessed by many—the powerful tendency of which to tranquilize the mind under bodily affliction, I have been delighted to see so strikingly exemplified in yourself.” The Doctor paused, and then added, “Correct and useful as you have been, a pattern of filial tenderness, of Christian piety, exemplary in all your conduct, surely in reviewing your past life you cannot find much to press heavily upon your conscience. If too tender, too overcharged, we must allow something on that subject to the present debility of your frame; a state which, in extending itself to the mind, often magnifies past errors.”

“Oh! not so,” continued Philimore; “the powers of my mind, I grant, a few months back seemed greatly shaken and impaired; I could not bring it under subjection; I could not control its wanderings; I could not think of this hour but with the utmost dread: in proportion, however, as my bodily pains augmented and my frame dissolved, my mind regained its strength—more than regained it. It now soars above this earthly clog of matter; it longs to burst its prison, and soar to other regions, reposing entirely on its Maker’s loving kindness for pardon for all its past offences. ‘O Death! where is thy sting? O Grave! where is thy victory?’”

Triumphing over death, a divine glow pervaded him, and Dr. Lovesworth, whose soul was fitted to assimilate with such scenes, felt animated with like exaltation. Thoughts so high as those which occupy the dying spirit, yearning for immortality as earth recedes and heaven opens, cannot adequately be conveyed by language. Suffice it to observe, that the superhuman energies of the soul, become too big for its frail infirm casket to sustain, were made manifest in the state of Philimore, who in his efforts to express the sublime ideas which pervaded his mind, and filled his soul with a delightful anticipation of visionary bliss, sunk back, overcome, faint, and exhausted. A slight spasm seized him, and in the next instant he fell motionless, as if already in the arms of death.

The physician was sent for, and administered to his patient, who after an interval revived, and his friends in withdrawing had the satisfaction of seeing him sink into repose. His parents conceived that it might be a favourable symptom, and hope once more re-animated their doubting minds and restored again their drooping spirits.

Their son at length awoke, and for the first time since his long excruciating malady appeared invigorated from his slumber. His voice became more audible, and before the evening closed he again expressed a desire to converse with Dr. Lovesworth.

Seated on his couch, he related every particular in connection with his past intercourse with Oriana,—the secret trials, conflicts, and combats he had endured

whilst under the influence of so powerful a passion. He deeply lamented the unhappy effects to which it had given rise.

“As long,” added he, “as a fondness for existence lasted, it was impossible for me to surmount it. But having conquered and subdued all relish for the things of this world, it is now only to my Creator that I can indissolubly attach myself; all other loves having become subordinate, or such as spring from the centre and origin of their existence. Oriana viewed in this light is still dear to me, intensely so; but I love her as I ought to do, with the utmost purity of thought, involving in it nought of earth or self, wholly independent of which, it is her happiness, her immortal happiness only that fills my soul. Though duly impressed with a sense of my error, yet in humility I may add, I feel assured of pardon from Him before whose throne I must shortly appear. It remains for me also to hope, that the family of Oriana, when they hear that I am no more, will extend to me their charitable forgiveness, and also receive into their bosoms their beloved daughter. She is prepared for my dissolution, and awaits that event with the strength and fortitude of mind of which she is mistress. Tell the good General and Mrs. DeBrooke that if their daughter has swerved from her duty towards them, it is I alone who am culpable, and for that fatal error have paid the forfeit of a premature death; for though my complaint early assumed a dangerous tendency, yet of this I am conscious, that it might have admitted of

amelioration. It was the barrier, the insurmountable barrier, that opposed our union."

"My dear Philimore," said the Doctor, interrupting him, and grasping the hand he held in his, "I wish it were in my power to recall you to existence; I wish it were not too late. Surely life passed with Oriana, that beloved object, may yet have charms for you. Why do you seek and wish for death? live, oh! live, my young friend, to bless, and to be blest by her. Had you made me your confidant sooner, you, together with the partner of your affections, should have shared my fortunes; my incomparable young friend, my son, my adopted son, with pride of heart I acknowledge it, since the demise of my father, who bequeathed to me so largely, I mentioned you in my will."

Overwhelmed with grateful affection, Philimore raised himself on his bed of languishing, and looking steadfastly at the Doctor, would have poured forth the effusions of his heart.

"Had I possessed a worthier friend," returned the Doctor, "he would have been preferred before you."

Raising the hand of that generous man, Philimore strained it to his bosom.

"Even life," said he, "passed with Oriana here below, would have no longer charms for me. My soul has made its choice, and nothing, no temptation however great, could have power to change it. To return to earth after having experienced a foretaste of Heaven!—impossible! Who would return a willing

captive to his prison-house, his tenement of clay, when life and immortality shine upon the ravished view? Love and fortune, both, you would persuade me, are now mine. Yet however within my reach, however tempting they may appear, when I think upon the contrarieties, the restraints, the uncertainties that in this sublunary temporary sojourn would interpose their bane, the scene appears joyless, and I fly, rejoicing fly, to rest my hopes, faith, confidence on that base which is immutable, never-changing, never-ending; in a word, I fly to repose myself on the bosom of my God."

He sunk back, his eyes closed, and Dr. Lovesworth feared the sublime energy with which he had spoken might again have diffused its exhaustion over him. In closing, therefore, the curtains, he withdrew, leaving him to the care of his mother; and in the interval pursued the train of his own reflections.

"It was the love Philimore has borne Oriana," thought he, "operating upon a feeble frame, which has reduced him to the state we now behold him. And yet, had he power to revive, and to share with her ease, content, and all the enjoyments an elegant competency can afford, he would not! What more than this can better prove the real emptiness of earthly happiness! The mind when once detached from nature never feels the most distant bias to return to it, but, progressive in its states, looks onward to a kingdom whose joys are not, like these, ephemeral, but unfading and everlasting,—where no shadows mock the view!"

It was not long ere the Doctor was recalled to the

couch of Philimore. The voices of lamentation that reached him from the afflicted parents assured him that the dying hour of their son had approached. He was supported on the bosom of his mother, while the distracted father held one of his hands, and, as the Doctor drew near, he extended to him the other.

“Generous, exalted friend,” he said, “to thy care I commend my parents, as also my Oriana: you have smoothed for me the bed of death; I die contented.”

Dr. Lovesworth pressed him in his embrace, saying, “Your parents shall be cherished by me.”

“Tell Oriana,” added Philimore in faint accents, “that my latest prayer was breathed for her happiness.”

He paused awhile, then, raising his nearly dimmed eyes and feeble arms to Heaven, gave an affecting blessing to all around him; after which one convulsive sigh escaped him, and he sunk lifeless in the arms of his parents.

“So fades a summer cloud away;
So sinks the gale when storms are o’er;
So gently shuts the eye of day;
So dies a wave along the shore.”

Their joy, pride, and prop was gone for ever! the last breath had transpired—the vital heat was extinguished, never more to be re-animated.

The first tribute that Dr. Lovesworth paid to the memory of his young friend was to mingle his tears with those of the unhappy parents.

The mother’s grief was intense, but not in any way comparable to the inconsolable nature of that of the

father. That pride and ambition which had so eagerly led him to desire a wealthy union for his son, had received its greatest check, and with its total frustration he felt humbled to a level with the dust.

“ Had I married him to the daughter of De Brooke,” exclaimed he, tearing his silver locks, “ oh, had I married him to Oriana, to the object of his affections, this would not have been,—I should not have seen this day’s misery !”

Frantic with the agony of his feelings, he bewailed his loss, giving a lesson to those worldly parents, had such been present, who, from selfish views, most unjustifiably sacrifice the virtuous inclinations of their children,—a lesson by which they might have profited. He was insensible to aught besides his son, who lay inanimate and lifeless before him.

Notwithstanding the influence of his son’s example, Mr. Philimore had never lived a life strictly moral; without a profession, or occupation of any sort, living upon his means, with several sons to advance in life, of whom Edmund Philimore was the elder, he had not been over circumspect in the improvement of his fortunes. The death of that son so much beloved above the rest, snatched from him in the full flower of intellect and vigour of days, called him at last, in the evening of his life, to reflection: and in the reformation of the father an unerring and merciful Hand might be visible, as, aided by the enlightened conversation of Dr. Lovesworth, he was led

to the contemplation of that state in which alone he might ever expect to be united to his son.

The day before the funeral was to take place, Oriana was set down by her aunt at the usual corner, whence she drew near that house of mourning. The closed windows, the awful stillness reigning within, foreboded to her the melancholy catastrophe. Not daring to uplift the knocker, she rang the bell slightly, and being admitted, was immediately made acquainted with what she had feared. Scarcely able to sustain herself, she entered a back parlour, where she was received by Dr. Lovesworth,—that friend so much esteemed by the dear deceased and by herself. He advanced affectionately towards her; compassion and benevolence mingled in his tones and looks as he offered her a seat, into which she sunk, pale and trembling: however long that moment might have been anticipated, the trial seemed infinite and beyond her strength.

“Be composed, my dear young lady,” said the Doctor, placing himself beside her: “it is true our loved friend is no more an inhabitant of this sorrowing sphere; we are taught to believe that ere now he has entered upon a state preparatory to final blessedness, from which there are few, I imagine, who would recall their friends.”

Oriana could reply only by her tears, which at last flowing plentifully, gave relief to the feelings she had been struggling to suppress.

“It was a happy release from human infirmity,”

continued the Doctor, "prepared as he was for those beatitudes upon which he is about to enter. The superior excellence of our religion teaches, that when the mind, from its elevation in heavenly knowledge, has raised the affections and its thoughts above the external things of earth and matter, we contemplate death under quite a different aspect;—creating in us such sweet influences of joy, that our beloved brethren, under one common Father, have attained what we ought all to be in search of, the heavenly goal, that rather than repine at this their advancement, we sincerely felicitate them. Natural affections are agreeable to our natural state, and he who does not feel them is a monster; but truly Christian minds, submissive to the will of heaven, know how to keep the natural in subordination to celestial loves. Let the loss of our friends give encouragement, a fresh stimulus to overcome all that would oppose us in the life of goodness, when we shall be brought nearer to them, even in our spirits, perhaps, to hold pure intercourse with them; and when the last moment comes, how short will be the transition, how calm, how blissful—even like to Philimore's—to fall asleep in one world, to awake in another, those heavenly regions, where every pure desire or wish of the heart is instantaneously gratified, where those we have so much valued here will reappear to bless our sight! Such, dear Miss De Brooke, are the contemplations to which I would gladly direct your thoughts."

Language so consolatory was not without its due effect. Mrs. Philimore then entered, to whom the sight of one who had been so much beloved by her son revived impressions deeply affecting. Oriana was strained to her bosom, and they mingled their tears together.

The sorrow of Oriana for the irrecoverable loss of Philimore, by the hand of Death, was infinitely assuaged and softened by preceding circumstances; and when she compared what she then felt, to what she had formerly done, when she first awoke to the sudden frightful impression of having for ever lost his affections, how great seemed the difference! Then, truly inconsolable, nought was presented amidst the desolation of her feelings that could offer relief.

Mrs. Philimore possessed a mind so truly resigned, patient, and submissive to the decrees of Providence, that in effect she needed not any great exertions of self control to enable her to endure her loss with fortitude. Having subdued the tears naturally excited by seeing Oriana, the conversation she held with her, in which the whole singular strength of her mind was displayed, in addition to the Doctor's late discourse, acted powerfully upon Oriana, in teaching her a fresh lesson of resignation. Feeling herself equal to a task that one might have supposed to call for the utmost stretch of human courage, she expressed a desire once again to behold her Philimore.

Yielding to a request that was made somewhat in

the language of entreaty, the mother of him whose earthly remains they were about to witness led the way; as they were quitting the room, Dr. Loveworth, gently laying his hand on Oriana, said, "Are you assured that you have sufficient resolution? Recollect that it is a picture of mortality only that you would view, whence all that composed the life or being has departed, leaving but those gross particles, that material covering, which is to return to dust, sent for a time but to fulfil its purposes here. It is not a spectacle to convey peace, but rather the contrary."

Perceiving she still made a motion to follow Mrs. Philimore, he added, "But if your mind is strong enough to bear it, I will add nothing further to detain you: the melancholy sight of the dissolution of the human body is not without its utility; it shows us the monstrosity of evil, of which it is the type, or corresponding image!"

Oriana shuddered, and the Doctor, in order to raise her thoughts to more sublime considerations, said, "The soul of our Philimore, in its kindred spheres, will assume a spiritual form, not subject to decay, substantial, bright, perfect, in harmony with its conceptions, and its elevation in Truth and Goodness."

Doubtful whether to proceed, Oriana hesitated; but the voice of Mrs. Philimore encouraged her, and she reached the chamber of death. How great was its solemnity! Mrs. Philimore moved before, and approached the bed. Oriana found her strength

fail: the whole attention of the hapless mother became absorbed; she had removed the covering which shrouded the once intelligent features of her son,—the soul once beaming there—how changed! how faint the resemblance!

In low and plaintive accents she called upon Oriana to look; alas! she could not. The recent observations of the Doctor filled her thoughts; and why, wherefore, in one fatal moment of indiscretion, deprive her mental sight from any longer beholding the saint-like smile, the saint-like image, the countenance her Philimore had presented to her at their last interview—rob herself of that beautiful angelic expression for the contemplation of the present, which would leave its traces equally indelible? During the awful reflection and suspense which succeeded, again the semblance of Philimore passed before her inward sight, again his last words and blessing sounded upon her ear; a seraphic light and meek submission dwelt around him, as he seemed to whisper, “Weep not, my Oriana, I am happy!”

The lovely vision enwrapt her soul. Mrs. Philimore said, “Oriana, look!” Starting at the sound, her every nerve shook, and she feebly uttered, “I cannot!” Mrs. Philimore pressed her lips upon the cold inanimate clay, and again veiling that face, overshadowed by the hues of mortality, in silent anguish led Oriana from the apartment where Philimore in calm composure, his soul returned to its native dwelling-place, ere passion had taught his breast to throb with

other feelings and emotions, in all the purity of genuine devotion and infant simplicity, fixed on the beatitudes of eternity, yielded up his spirit.

“O weep not for him, 't is unkindness to weep;
The weary weak frame has but fallen asleep.
No more of fatigue nor endurance it knows;
O weep not—O break not its gentle repose.”

CHAPTER XVI.

“ He gazed, he saw ; he knew the face
 Of beauty, and the form of grace !
 It was Francesca by his side,
 The maid who might have been his bride.”

BYRON.

AFTER Dr. Lovesworth had paid the last duties and tribute of sorrow due to the memory of his deceased young friend, and had experienced the consolation of seeing that his exertions to restore peace to the afflicted parents had not been entirely fruitless, he returned to Wales, again to enjoy the retirement of his own quiet but circumscribed dwelling, where, to avoid further detail, we find it convenient unceremoniously to transport him.

On hearing his recital of the death of Philimore, the De Brookes could not restrain their tears. Few possessed the power of acting as a mediator, of calming the feelings, and gaining upon the confidence so much as Dr. Lovesworth ; and charged as he had been by his dying friend, as also by Oriana, to disclose the circumstance of their long and secret intercourse, he thought the present time would be the most favourable for the occasion.

When he had ceased to speak, the General, with

silent surprise, dwelt upon the determined negative he had received from Philimore in answer to the questions he had put to him on the subject of his apparent attachment to his daughter, now so fully revealed by Dr. Lovesworth, but upon which, from motives of deep concern and delicacy to the memory of the deceased, the General passed slightly over, bearing in mind the maxim of treading lightly on the ashes of the dead; he confined himself to the observation, that it was what he had long suspected, but feared to countenance; that had he possessed a fortune to have bestowed on Oriana, Philimore was the man to whom he would have rejoiced to have given her; even as it was, he expressed much regret that he had not been timely acquainted with their mutual attachment and desire of union; which, far from opposing, he might have been led, upon finding that the young people had set their hearts upon each other, to have promoted.

“But, my good Doctor,” added this kind father, “we must refer all things to Omnipotent agency, as you would teach us the decrees of Providence are just. Had my daughter espoused this deserving object of her choice, she might, in having been left an early widow, had more bitter anguish to surmount than that with which she is tried at the present moment.”

“It was chiefly on account of his father,” replied the Doctor, addressing the General, “that Philimore persevered in so rigidly keeping the secret of his at-

tachment, having been once told by him, in the language of worldly dictatorial authority, that he would sooner follow him to the grave than that he should see him marry without fortune. Miserable man! he little conceived that it was thus to happen, or gladly would he have revoked the harsh, unnatural sentence! He now calls upon Oriana a thousand times a day; he lives but in her presence; she has become his idol; every letter she has penned to his son is cherished by him more than words can express. So merciful are the dispensations of the Supreme, that in taking the son to himself,—in this event we behold that which could alone have touched the heart of the father, in a manner to withdraw him from a world of which he has been hitherto so fond.”

Deeply sympathising in the distress of her beloved sister, Rosilia much lamented that she was not at the Bower, in order that she might, by participating, lessen and soothe her sorrow.

In taking his leave the Doctor said, that his late unexpected absence from the Hermitage had left him much to do, that he had a long circuit to make around the neighbourhood, and many visits to pay.

“Will you pardon the intrusion, Doctor,” said Rosilia, recollecting her little favourite, “and allow me to accompany you, even so far as the cottage where we discovered the dear little Rose?” which was the name of the child in whom Rosilia felt so tender an interest.

The Doctor assuring her that her company would

greatly tend to the agreeableness of his walk, they accordingly set off together.

As soon as they had entered the cottage, the little girl, who could already walk alone, no sooner saw Rosilia than she joyfully threw herself into the arms extended to receive her. It had been agreed by the Doctor, that whilst he pursued his morning's avocations, she would remain to pass an hour or two with the child, until he called to take her up, and conduct her home.

Not less innocent, but still more lovely than her blooming charge, Rosilia delighted to ramble with her through those pleasant meadows and beautiful winding alleys adjacent to the cottage; sometimes she chased her round the garden, and sometimes, seated in a rustic recess, taught her to pronounce some words, and to form her lisping accents into an articulation more intelligible; while Rose, often weary of the task, would stray away, and after a short interval playfully return, her little hands being laden with flowers, fresh and glowing as herself, whilst, with frolic humour in her face, she tossed the rich profusion into the lap of her sweet instructress. To please the charming child, Rosilia would twine them into a wreath, which she would encircle around the curly head or snow-white bosom of the beautiful infant.

Having been thus employed, and fatigued from exercise, they returned to the cottage. Her thoughts and affections still occupied by her infant playmate,

Rosilia requested the nurse to continue her employment outside, while the inside of the cottage was left solely in possession of herself and Rose, whom the better to accommodate, Rosilia seated herself upon a small stool in the centre of the floor, when the child in playfulness slipped from her head the combs which confined her hair, and instantly those silken tresses, falling to the ground, spread luxuriantly like a sable veil around her. Amused by the sight, the sportive child stood laughing, and again approaching twisted her fingers through the rich infoldings.

On a sudden the door opened, and ere Rosilia could arise, or perceive who entered, a voice exclaimed, "My child!" Rosilia was not unacquainted with those accents; they penetrated her soul. She raised her head, uttered a faint sigh, and fell senseless at the feet of Douglas!

Every nerve agitated to excess by the strong pulsations of his heart, for an instant he stood bewildered, devouring with ardent eyes the object before him; in the next, he called aloud for assistance, he raised the fainting Rosilia, he knelt by her side, he supported her in his trembling arms. She continued motionless. His eyes darting rays of inexpressible anguish wandered over that countenance, though pale and inanimate, still beautiful and touching,—that countenance no time, no change, no event had power to erase from his soul!

A carriage drove to the door, the nurse of Rose flew to meet it, and a lady alights. Upon entering

the cottage, what a scene does she witness !—Douglas bending over a young creature so singularly interesting ; Rosilia just recovering from a fainting fit, her locks dishevelled, partly straying and partly infolding her lovely form. With tenderness and compassion she lends her aid in applying restoratives, and Douglas, resigning to her his charge, steps back, a feeling of delicacy prompting him to retire ; but, as if affected by some secret talisman, he remained fixed to the spot.

Expressive of the tenderest sympathy, Rosilia's inquiring eyes fell upon his faded countenance ; its sudden transition from white to red, indicative of the strong emotions he laboured under, was even unnoticed by her, so deeply absorbed was she in comparing the past to the present circumstances, and realizing in the being before her the frequent vision of her imagination. Her silent eloquence, her steady look, were insupportable to his feelings ; and that rapturous gaze he had but for one moment indulged in, was succeeded by a depression, an overwhelming sensation : hope, so long extinct within him, had suddenly awakened, presenting images as blissful as they were fugitive : he trembled, and dreaded again to encounter those melting eyes, which spoke, as he conceived, at once so flattering and so dangerous a language ; for, notwithstanding every circumstance had insinuated the powerful interest she felt for him, yet a heart like his, long acquainted with sorrow, no more in thoughtless confidence yields to the

bright impression, lest disappointment should again succeed, and diffuse its blasts of chill despondency!

The attention of Rosilia, as also that of Douglas, were at last diverted from each other by the cries of Rose, who, held in her nurse's arms, was struggling to get from her. Douglas taking the child, pressed her fondly, and then consigned her to the lady, who was no other than Mrs. Melbourne. The impatient child, however, not yet satisfied, endeavoured to climb upon Rosilia, who was seated near. Perceiving they were no strangers to each other, Mrs. Melbourne said, "I am come with Colonel Douglas to see my god-daughter, and intend, with his permission, taking her back with me."

These few words recalled to Rosilia her scattered ideas, and revealed to her at once the truth. That child, for whom she had imbibed so great an affection, was the child of Douglas, who, after more than three years' absence, had returned to his country, a widower, and with the rank of Colonel. He had been very ill, and it had been expected he would have followed his deceased wife to the tomb. Even now his altered appearance indicated how much he had suffered.

Thus, in rapid succession, passed the thoughts of Rosilia, who, endeavouring to assume placidity, once more essayed to express her thanks to Mrs. Melbourne for her kind attentions, and Douglas heard again those sweet accents that had been wont to fall upon his ear as the flowing of gentle breezes.

Meanwhile his affectionate child flung her arms in fond endearment around the neck of Rosilia, who returned her caresses. Beneath that humble roof, Douglas, reclining against the opposite wall, with wrapt contemplation beheld the lovely pair. The soft charms of his child, her flaxen ringlets, her azure eye, formed a pleasing contrast to the rich profusion and ripened lustre of Rosilia's beauty.

She was now more than twenty, but that juvenile innocence, that sweet simplicity of manner, which had so much fascinated him during the dawn of his attachment, still remained. The privations she had since encountered, the sorrows she had overcome, had blended with her meek humility an air of dignity. Her whole deportment, though irresistibly attractive, yet manifested that her virtue, established on the firmest base, could surmount and triumph over every latent weakness of her breast. The reflection did not awe him,—it did not lessen his admiration of her, but it chastened and controlled his passion; while respect, esteem, or some influence still more powerful, seemed to call into action every interior bias of his soul,—every thought, idea, and sentiment combined seemed to attract him closer to her—to unite his heart to hers in the indissoluble links of the purest and most perfect love.

The appearance of Douglas was greatly altered; that animating brilliancy which, as a playful meteor, had before invested him, was no longer visible; his eyes no longer sparkled with the ostentatious beams

of pride and vanity. Nevertheless, his countenance was illumined, was strongly marked; a deep reflection,—a composure, like that which springs from calm of conscience, bespoke a mind at last subdued and at rest with itself, after having been long subjected to the influence of irregular feeling, and tossed by tumultuous passions.

The rational part of his nature, or that dignity of thought which prompts to virtue, had entirely established its empire over him,—had taught him to curb and restrain those strong propensities of his nature, which, for want of being directed to their due order, had so frequently led him, during the earlier part of his life, into the commission of error, and the perversion of his fine understanding.

Acute bodily sufferings, but recently endured from a deep and dangerous wound, had given to him an emaciated appearance, serving the more forcibly to mark the bust-like cast of his expressive features, whilst the slight languor visible in his lofty, slender, but perfect form, gave a still higher interest to the exquisite grace, the elegance which characterized his whole deportment. The spring of his days had just passed, and, though but turned of thirty, he appeared as if in the meridian of his summer.

Having resumed his self-command, Douglas inquired of Rosilia very particularly after every individual of her family; to which replying, and feeling by

degrees a calm delight pervade her, as if in the presence of one whose soul was purified, and who seemed to regard her with a chaste tenderness, with looks and accents of conciliating softness, Rosilia asked how long he had returned from India.

“But a few months since,” was the answer; and which entirely accorded with the idea which had struck her, that it was certainly Douglas whom she had seen on crutches, when passing on quickly to the house of Mrs. Belmour, and whose exclamation, so flattering, had sounded in a voice so familiar to her ear.

She then asked whether it was the pernicious effects of the climate which had induced him to leave the country.

“No; not so,” was his hasty reply.

He was about adding, he had been wounded, but his voice faltered,—an association of thought, in connection with his wound and Harcourt, who, like himself, was the warm and fervent lover of Rosilia, and consequently his rival, had suffused with crimson the cheeks of Douglas, and might well denote some deep and distressing feelings possessed his mind.

Regretting to have put the question, Rosilia changed the subject; when Mrs. Melbourne remarked, that, as she resided in the neighbourhood, it would give her great pleasure to extend her acquaintance to the General and Mrs. De Brooke:

Scarcely had she finished speaking, when Doctor Lovesworth entered from his morning's ramble for the purpose of conducting Rosilia to her home. Recognising in him a friend she had formerly known, Mrs. Melbourne hastily left her seat to meet him, whilst surprise and pleasure were expressed by the Doctor. Not having seen each other for some time past, they were mutually delighted at this unexpected meeting. With much affection in his looks, the Doctor inquired after Mrs. Boville, the esteemed relict of his excellent father; adding, that the long sickness and ultimate dissolution of a young clerical friend having greatly absorbed his mind, had prevented him from paying her of late his usual respects.

Wishing to indulge in a conversation more enlarged than was then convenient, Mrs. Melbourne pressed the Doctor to return with her to Grove Place, the country habitation of Mrs. Boville.

“You must consent,” said she, “and allow me the pleasure of giving her this agreeable surprise, in the addition of her good son Lovesworth's company, upon our return.” In which invitation Douglas, though a stranger to the Doctor, cordially joined.

Mrs. Melbourne next solicited of Rosilia the favour of setting her down in her carriage at the Bower, which would afford her an introduction to Mrs. De Brooke and the General, after which she would return to the cottage, in order to take up the Doctor,

Colonel Douglas, and the little Rose. This point being duly adjusted, Douglas offered to conduct Rosilia to the carriage, whose heart, as he raised her hand, beat responsive to his; but scarcely was she seated when the cries of his child called the attention of Douglas. Lavishing upon her a thousand fond caresses, he raised her to the carriage window, struggling and extending her little hands to Rosilia; he next opened the door, and beheld with rapturous agitation the delight the act afforded her; the child looked innocently back and laughed: again taking her in his arms, Rosilia returned his bow, when rolling swiftly along the carriage was presently out of sight.

Mrs. De Brooke and the General were surprised to find a neat but elegant equipage stop at the door, whence Rosilia alighting, entered the room, introducing Mrs. Melbourne. The first civilities having passed, they mutually lent a gratified attention to the topics discussed by their new visitor: having been induced to take some refreshment, Mrs. Melbourne excused herself for not prolonging her stay, on account of those who awaited her return to the cottage; having also some miles to make ere they should reach home to a late repast.

No sooner had Mrs. Melbourne withdrawn than Rosilia largely expatiated to her parents upon the altered appearance of Douglas, and during the recital she endeavoured to command herself: her varied colour, panting bosom, and laboured breathing

betrayed the afflicting emotions by which she was agitated, on which account, as soon as she could retire, she fled to her own apartment, there to give free and unrestrained vent to the feelings she could not control.

CHAPTER XVII.

“ Our reformation, glittering o'er our fault,
Like to bright metal on a sullen ground,
Doth draw more homage, and attract more eyes,
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.”

AFTER some days' absence, immediately upon the return of Doctor Lovesworth to the Hermitage, he failed not to call upon his friends at the Bower. He expressed himself highly pleased with his visit, which in the course of a short period he had consented to renew, but upon condition only of his being favoured, for a few days during the intermediate period, by the company of Colonel Douglas.

“ The pleasure of seeing Mrs. Melbourne was quite unexpected,” said he, “ not having had the least intimation of her return from abroad, or that she was with her sister, Mrs. Boville, whom I had the satisfaction to settle in this our pleasing vicinity about twelve months since; you may recollect the circumstance, General, as calling me away from London during the period of your stay there. My duty to Mrs. Boville, as my step-mother, demanded of me

a greater punctuality in my correspondence and visits than I have fulfilled, but in stating to her the causes of my seeming negligence of her she has forgiven me. Indeed, I was meditating a trip to see her, and which my rencontre with Mrs. Melbourne hastened. Had I done so sooner, we should not have been at a loss," added he, turning to Rosilia, "to have discovered the origin of your little favourite Rose. I never in my life passed a more agreeable time. I had much pleasing conversation with the ladies; but the subject upon which they most delighted to dwell was the virtues of Colonel Douglas, whom Mrs. Melbourne affectionately styles her son, from his having espoused, it seems, her *protégée*, and whom she had been pleased to call her adopted daughter. Colonel Douglas has but recently returned with her from India, where by great personal merit and ability in his profession he has obtained very rapid promotion. He is a noble fellow truly; his dignified stature, the commanding graces of his person, are surpassed alone, in my estimation, by the superior lustre of his mind. To the most extensive knowledge of men and things, acquired by study, travel, and observation, he unites a peculiar urbanity of manner, which insensibly wins upon the esteem. I remember to have seen Ellina Airey when she was but a child; she appeared by no means promising, sufficiently so at least as to render her in after years calculated for the wife of Douglas. I might have been mistaken; under the tuition of a loving and

beloved husband, her expansion of mind might have been considerable. Called from him under circumstances the most painful and interesting, Mrs. Melbourne assured me, his resignation only to the Divine will, enabled him to surmount such a trial. Nevertheless, from the remarks I gathered as to the general character of her *protégée*, I do not think she was a partner altogether suited to Douglas. The understanding of her husband could have been but imperfectly appreciated by her, since in many respects their tastes differed. A man who wishes to enjoy the conjugal state in its perfect bliss, should select for his partner (if haply amidst the crowd he should find such a one,) the female whose capacity is best suited to admire, exalt, and take delight in his attainments, to whatever branch of learning, literature, art, or science they are directed; not that it is necessary she herself should be skilled in such, but that her tastes should so incline as to afford her a strong relish for her husband's acquirements. Nothing can induce me to imagine that it is in the bright scenes of prosperity affection is proved, in those circles where the attention of each is divided by a thousand splendid trifles, by a succession of events as unimportant as they are useless. It is in the quiet and more social scenes of life that the lovely and affectionate wife clings to her partner, and he becomes her prop; the distracting cares of the world, indeed, may have robbed her, for a season, of those domestic joys she had been ever seeking to perpe-

tuates; and though the mind of her husband, relaxed for a time, had seemed to become insensible to those satisfactions to be derived only from a married life, yet the time approaches when she recovers her ascendancy,—when the tie which unites them is bound together still closer,—and every trial they had mutually experienced serves but to renew their friendship, increase their confidence, and link their souls in that mutual union they hope may never be dissolved.”

Rosilia’s bosom, at such a picture, swelled and throbbled with a high-fraught sense of delight; while, having spoken from his own experience, a tear to the memory of his departed consort bedewed his cheek.

Mrs. De Brooke asked if he knew the cause which had deprived Douglas of his wife.

“ In giving birth to that innocent my dear Rosilia and myself discovered in one of our morning rambles, and which became afterwards so great a favourite with her.” The tears of Rosilia bespoke her sensibility upon the occasion. “ Mrs. Melbourne told me,” he continued, “ his grief, under such an afflicting cause, if not extravagant, was extremely severe; and that if it had not been from consolations and supports far above human aid, she believes he would have sunk under the stroke. By all she says of him, he must have made the best of husbands. Indeed, nothing of the account she gave of him seemed in the least exaggerated; for being permitted

to enter the little sanctuary of his retirement, called his study, everything around presented the delights arising from infinite resource; everything I saw breathed upon my soul an intellectual harmony, an unutterable pleasure; the solid charms of literature, but above all, the master of this little paradise, enchanted, whilst they riveted my attention with delight unspeakable."

Such unequivocal praise and high commendations from Dr. Lovesworth, a man of such exalted worth and superior character, sunk deep into Rosilia's mind and heart, arousing into energy her every latent and inmost feeling. No longer then was it sentiment triumphing over reason; it was the joint concurrence of each. Her affections and understanding, no longer at variance, mingled together in delightful concord, giving to her soul that placidity, that inward joy, she might have imagined to exist, but had never before experienced.

Douglas, when invested with all the brilliancy of health, animation, and manhood's ripened vigour, excited her admiration, but never those lively sentiments of esteem, respect, and regard, as Douglas faded in person, repairing his errors, alive to truth, and to the consciousness that virtue alone is truly great and noble. His talents, ever shining, were now still more improved by that delicacy of taste, refinement of soul,—that quick sensibility of what was right or wrong we may in vain seek for but in those whose hearts are formed, not to applaud only, but to

discern and deeply to feel and acknowledge the transcendent beauty of moral wisdom.

“Will you, my dear Doctor,” said the General, “when Colonel Douglas visits you, tell him how happy I shall feel myself to renew my acquaintance with him, and to shake him cordially by the hand. For my own part, I am free to confess it, I ever felt a predilection for Douglas; the ingenuousness of his manners, so wholly opposed to art or dissimulation, the honourable and candid manner in which he confided in me upon a domestic and family affair, left, I can assure you, its due impressions upon me: but this we need not dwell upon.”

The Doctor having promised to recall the General to the recollection of Douglas, set off on his walk back to the Hermitage, where Colonel Douglas duly arrived, according to the invitation he had received, for the purpose of spending a day or two.

Not wishing to delay the pleasure of seeing him, the General took an early occasion of paying his respects. Returning to his little family, highly gratified by his visit, the first address which broke from him was,

“This gallant which thou seest,
Was in the wreck; and, but he's something stain'd
With grief, (that beauty's canker,) thou mightst call him
A goodly person.

“I might call him
A thing divine, for nothing natural
I ever saw so noble.”

Such was the language of Miranda, and to which

Rosilia's heart responded, as, deeply colouring, she listened to what her father had more to advance.

“ I have but one cause of regret,” said he, “ which is, that we shall lose Douglas out of the neighbourhood sooner than we anticipated ; he intends to prolong his stay but a few weeks, for the purpose of recovering his health, and then to make an excursion into Scotland, to revisit his brother, Lord Deloraine, who, it seems, left our old dwelling Mount Zephyr to return to revisit the seat of his ancestors.” The countenance of Rosilia expressed her disappointment, which increased upon her father adding, “ It appears that, since the loss of his wife, Douglas is more than ever wedded to his profession. I was much pleased in hearing him express himself in the words of a true patriot : if he were not born in England, he had the happiness of being introduced into it at a very early period of his life ; the greater part of his friends were English ; his first affections had been nurtured in it ; that he regarded it in the light of a mother soil ; its union with Scotland, indeed, rendered it to him completely such ; that as he had embarked in its service, he hoped to finish his career in its defence.”

At these words Rosilia became still more agitated. The bright dawnings of affection and approving reason had insensibly taken possession of her ; and now that the worth of Douglas had become so conspicuously manifest ; when that impediment, the only one formerly existing to oppose an union with him, was

now so entirely removed, that, sanctioned by a self-approving conscience, she could have felt herself free to have indulged attachment for him ; now, when her heart had dilated with the idea of becoming his future companion, of mitigating his sorrows, and of sharing his joys,—“ How vain, how wrong, how censurable, to have allowed thought, busy and active thought, thus to wander ! How erroneous in her to imagine that the former attachment which Douglas professed for her might revive !—had he not been wedded, and attached to another !” she mentally ejaculated.

In losing his wife, Douglas, if he had not been passionately enamoured of her, had loved her tenderly ; and as he had conceived his destiny would for ever oppose an union with Rosilia, the first and only female capable of truly and deeply assimilating with his mind and its affections, he had resolved entirely to devote himself to his profession, and give up every future idea of forming a second time the matrimonial tie.

Previous to his having become a widower, he had an occasion of renewing a friendship with one who had been a student with him in his days of youth, the recollection of which, together with meeting abroad, naturally helped to strengthen the intimacy formerly existing. Douglas, however, perceived a sensible alteration in the manners of his friend since he had assumed the title of manhood. He had always known him to possess eccentricity of character, tinctured with romance—a heart sensitive, a

fancy warm, a penetration acute; those endowments were now often obscured by a deep reserve, causing Douglas to entertain the supposition that, in addition to a natural bias to melancholy, sorrow and disappointment might have also crossed his path; circumstances which, though far from being anxious to dive into, accident discovered he was not mistaken in.

“ Though but a giddy youth,” said Douglas to him one day, “ I once remember to have been much delighted by a small poem you had composed upon the subject of a youth, immersed in business during the week, escaping on a Sunday from the noise and confusion of a busy town, to wander, Arcadian-like, amidst groves, and breathing forth upon the occasion the romantic enthusiasm of his soul. Chance brought him to a spot where he discovered a female of such exquisite grace and beauty that he became instantly enamoured. The story was wrought up in a manner, that the fair one returned his passion; and the bliss of the lovers upon the occasion was very happily described. I remember you seemed completely under poetical inspiration, such a glow of language followed, so much energy you threw into the detail.”

“ Alas !” returned his friend, “ I was then new to life, and the happiness I painted was from those pristine colourings the heart glows with ere it meets with disappointment. The subject was pleasing, and I had deluded myself with the fond hope that such joys might be one day mine.”

“It is rarely in human life,” rejoined Douglas, “we realize the inimitable paintings our imaginations form, and less so during the effervescent period of youth. The bright impression glows upon the fancy, ravishes the mental view, but ere long vanishes, and leaves the prospect desolate and forlorn.”

“Pardon me,” said his friend, “you have struck upon a chord which for one short moment vibrates to a sense of joy. I have beheld an object the prototype of the female I had painted; myself, like the youth in the fable, became instantly enamoured, my ideas absorbed by her image; and in the fervour of a new-born passion, I hovered around this enchantress, as though unable to breathe or to support existence but in the beatitudes of her sphere; but unlike the termination of my story, notwithstanding every attempt I made to be admitted to her presence, the irresistible impulse which impelled me to disclose the powerful yet delicate sentiment, the perfect homage with which her pure loveliness had inspired me, was checked with the harsh-sounding, the prophetic words, jarring like discord in my ears, pronounced by that woman Herbert whose house she inhabited, ‘That Miss De Brooke (Rosilia De Brooke was her name,) ‘was engaged, from years of infancy, to her son, Edward Herbert.’”

“Gracious heavens!” in his turn exclaimed Douglas, half starting from his seat, “Ro—si—lia De Brooke! Was it truly she?”

A sudden paleness overspread his cheeks: recol-

lecting, however, that he was then the husband of another, he endeavoured to rally and divert from himself the keen glance of Harcourt,—for it was no other than he of whom we have before spoken,—which became almost insupportable, and said with emphasis, “ Engaged to her son! Merciful powers! that such a creature should have been, doomed to bless the rude embrace of a Herbert—a mere strippling in mind as in form!”

“ Just so unpromising a youth as I had imagined,” continued Harcourt; “ there lay the deadly bane that poisoned my repose. But you have been acquainted with her, then?”

“ I have been,” was the laconic reply of Douglas, who, after a few minutes’ hesitation, added, “ You will not wonder at the exclamation which escaped me, when I tell you how greatly the mother of that young man has duped you, there not existing the smallest ground of truth in the assertion she made you.”

Douglas then entered upon a minute detail of all that had passed between himself and Herbert, whilst companions in the same vessel, upon their destination to India. Absorbed by the distraction of his ideas, while his mind gradually unfolded to the deceit which had been practised upon him, “ What a harrowing tale you unfold!” ejaculated Harcourt; “ what a cursed fraud! And thy own precipitancy, Harcourt,—oh, thy cursed precipitancy!”

“ You should have made your pretensions known

to her father," observed Douglas, with an emotion, though unnoticed by Harcourt, he vainly sought to suppress.

"Instead of listening to that cursed hag," burst from Harcourt: "but it may not be too late!" Tumultuous hope engrossed him, and rising with haste, "It may not be too late! a glad idea—an inspiring idea has seized me. I will address a letter to her father, General De Brooke. I will state to him the impression made upon me by his lovely daughter; expose to him the injury done me; state to him that it was the only cause, the only motive which prompted me to continue a profession I was about to relinquish for ever. In short, my pretensions shall be laid candidly before him, and he will find that the fair Rosilia has no ignoble suitor in the impassioned and admiring Harcourt!"

Thus having vented the impetuosity of his feelings, though under scarcely less excitement, he relapsed into meditation; he considered the probable lapse of time that would intervene ere an answer could be obtained; time and distance were taken into his close calculation, as also the probable unsuccessful issue of the measure, involved in duties which he felt it would be then dishonourable to shrink from.

Breaking silence, and with looks disturbed and agitated, "How afflicting is my situation!" exclaimed he; "I have a second time embarked myself in this hateful profession, one wholly foreign to my choice: but since I have engaged in arms, and difficulties and

dangers innumerable surround me to shake my energies and frustrate my resolutions, no plausible reason left me to indulge in hope, I have nothing left but to make use of arms, to submit to their sanguinary strife, to await the struggle anticipated, the issue of the engagement likely to take place between us and the native chiefs—a convulsive shock it will be, no doubt,—when I will serve the British cause to the last drop in my veins. Harcourt in that day shall become renowned as a warrior, but it shall be the last of his fame!”

Such was Harcourt—warm, inflammable, ever transported by the extremes of enthusiasm.

Douglas having, in his devoted attachment to Rosilia, experienced equal sorrow and hope, fear and trial, as Harcourt,—in his contemplation, lost in the painful retrospect of the past, as connected with himself, and at the same time responding with heartfelt sympathy to the strong emotions he witnessed in his friend, he found it no easy task to calm and collect his thoughts: yet as he was now placed beyond the possibility of rivalry, he at last summoned sufficient firmness to his aid, and made use of every argument sincere friendship could dictate towards reducing the feelings of Harcourt to moderation, when they parted.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“The shrieks of agony and clang of arms
Re-echo to the fierce alarms.”

BEATTIE.

THE period next approached which made Douglas a father, but that event was destined to render him a widower.

Ere the months of mourning were expired he found himself appointed to the staff, for which his military studies had extensively qualified him. But no sooner had he entered upon the labours of his new situation, than in consequence of a sudden insurrection among the native troops, the whole of the British forces in that district were collected for the purpose of entirely reducing the extensive country to peace and order.

In the engagement which followed, Colonel Harcourt and Major Douglas rendered themselves most conspicuous by their valour, with this difference however, that the bravery of Douglas, cool and intrepid, was guided by discretion, while Harcourt's bordered upon rashness; twice was he warned by the officer in command to be more temperate in his zeal, to join a greater moderation to his courage—hazard-

ing with apparent indifference a life which had been several times observed to be in the most imminent danger. In the meantime every eye had been turned with admiration upon Douglas, who had by his single and formidable arm alone cut to pieces, and on all sides routed the enemy, when perceiving his gallant friend, the undaunted but intemperate Harcourt, engaged in a dangerous and unequal combat, he magnanimously flew to his succour, reaching him in time to receive the wound that was aimed at his friend—the lover of his Rosilia.

Overcome with pain and effusion of blood, tottering a few steps, he fell to the ground, apparently insensible; a state envied by Harcourt, who, with consternation unparalleled, supported in his arms the bleeding and, as he conceived, expiring Douglas. His dark hair clotted with gore, his eyes closed as if in death, excited in Colonel Melbourne and others who stood near the most lively feelings of sympathy and regret. Unable to be removed, from the continual flowing of blood, the soldiers of his corps, appalled at the idea of losing their respected and brave chief, flew in different directions to apprise the surgeon of the condition in which he lay, who, on examination, found that the ball which had penetrated his body could be easily extracted.

He also discovered that the excessive effusion of blood was from a sabre-cut in the head, which Douglas had received at the same moment with the musket-ball, whilst acting in defence of Harcourt, and which,

had it not been for the timely assistance of the surgeon, must inevitably have occasioned his immediate death, in the arms of the grateful but unhappy and nearly distracted Harcourt.

He was still, however, not free from danger; the bandage with which his temples had been bound was already steeped in the crimson tide; fresh ligatures were applied, and, excessively enfeebled by the loss of blood, he was assisted between the surgeon and Harcourt to rise, and given in charge to the soldiers in attendance, by whom he was committed to his tent. Even this, for his exhausted strength, proved an exertion too great, and ere he could be placed in a recumbent posture, he sunk into a long and deep swoon. Pale, lifeless, and extended, for some weeks he underwent those sufferings which his timely and humane precaution had averted from his friend.

He was instantly rewarded with the rank of Colonel.

No inflammation succeeding from the severe sabre stroke, and the ball from his side having been duly extracted, he was after a time, though with a frame, as may be conceived, enervated, pronounced in a state capable of undertaking a voyage to England, which was insisted upon by the surgeon as absolutely essential to the renovation and perfect re-establishment of his health; he accordingly made arrangements for quitting India.

It would be difficult to paint the sorrow of Har-

court upon beholding the inestimable Douglas, to whom he owed his life, reduced, for his sake, so greatly in constitution and strength as to render it doubtful whether he would reach alive the shores of his native country. With every demonstration of friendship, affection, and gratitude he accompanied him to the vessel, for a voyage in which he would fain have accompanied him.

“But a short time,” said he to his friend, “and we shall meet again; in the meanwhile forget me not; send sometimes a thought of me to India, to that foreign land where Harcourt is yet doomed awhile to linger. Think also of my interests upon the happy shore to which you are going. Should you meet the object of my idolatry, speak of me to her. If, perchance—but away!—my golden dreams of happiness are vanished: she has ere this period lived most probably to bless another.”

The vessel being now under weigh, Harcourt, still struggling with his feelings, after warmly embracing Douglas, left him to pursue his voyage, with Mrs. Melbourne and his child.

Upon the death of Ellina, who had in some sort supplied to her the deprivation of a daughter, Mrs. Melbourne instantly charged herself with the care of her lamented *protégée's* infant, but a few days old, to whom, by the permission of her father, she stood godmother, and fulfilled towards the helpless innocent, as much as lay in her power, cares amounting to the maternal. Duty and Inclination united to

render a task of so tender and pathetic a nature one which became closely linked with her affections. And since the loss she so deeply deplored, having often thought with regret upon the country she had quitted, her health also having suffered by the change, she immediately, when told of Douglas's projected departure from India, felt the strongest desire to accompany him; and to which Colonel Melbourne the more readily consented, having with reluctance yielded to her request of quitting England, willing as he had been to sacrifice the enjoyment of her society rather than that she should submit to the disadvantages attendant upon a residence in a clime usually found so pernicious to the female constitution.

Upon the arrival of Douglas in England, he was infinitely less feeble than when he had at first embarked: but when obliged to leave the house for the benefit of air, he was under the necessity of being supported by crutches.

Mrs. Melbourne, shortly after her disembarkation, left Douglas, to take up her residence with Mrs. Boville, an elder sister by some years, who upon becoming a widow, through the medium of Dr. Lovesworth, settled herself, as we have seen, about thirty miles from his Hermitage. Fondly as was Douglas attached to his child, yet finding that, leading the life of a bachelor, the care of her would be embarrassing to him, he very willingly and gratefully submitted her to her good and kind godmother Mrs. Melbourne; and in the meantime availed himself of his liberty to

visit some of the most fashionable resorts of England, whose salubrious springs had been recommended to him; and where he renewed his intimacy with several of his former associates, although he was now no longer to be drawn by them into those dissipated habits which seemed to form so great a portion of their happiness.

The world no longer spread before his gaze the delicious banquet of voluptuous enjoyment; its transient, its alluring pleasures were at an end: he was no longer to be enchained by its fatal and delusive charms. In the first dejected state of his mind upon the loss of Ellina, the future had presented but a sterile waste; a tranquil but languid repose at best seemed to await him—a torpid existence, a miserable endurance of life, when the soul, susceptible of an aching void, resigns itself to the supineness of apathy. After a time, however, he became more sensible of the reviving influence proceeding from renewed energy; luxurious indolence had for ever lost to him its *goût*; swayed by principles of reason only, with that firmness and self-command which of late years had formed so predominating a part of his character, he had continued to nurture with assiduity the active powers of his understanding, and by such means had more and more confirmed in himself the pure precepts of exalted wisdom.

Often drawn into fashionable life, he could not forbear reflecting upon the insipidity of such scenes, the vanity or weakness of the women, the many

glaring absurdities daily exhibited by his own sex ; in short, the train of his ideas was ever calculated to awaken that restless impatience, that incitement after some pursuit, some useful end, which the vigorous and well-ordered mind is so susceptible of feeling, when it makes to itself the painful and humiliating reflection, “What have I hitherto lived for? How useless has been my being! I have lived for myself alone!”

The letters he received from Mrs. Melbourne, and the pressing invitation she gave him, conjointly with Mrs. Boville her sister, to join them in the country, coincided exactly with his views, and as it thus favoured his inclinations, induced him, in compliance with their wishes, to make an immediate excursion thither; where, finding the air salubrious, the scenery lovely, the spot in itself so tranquil and serene, the labourer employed in husbandry, the shepherd tending his flock, the fragrance of nature breathing around, the clear canopy of Heaven above him,—“It is here,” thought he, “I should like to rest from my toils, and, after a due repose, recommence my career,—to be permitted to meditate amidst these shades awhile, and then to exertion! for it is active, and not passive life, to which man should feel himself called.”

Douglas paused. His eye ranged over the verdant and extensive landscape, that exquisite scenery on which the eye also of Rosilia had so often rested;—he had no conception she was so near him! A sort of heavenly and soothing calm stole upon his soul, as

if it were entranced in blessed communion with congenial spirits. Riding amidst those groves which so often in Wales strike upon the sight with such luxuriant beauty, and dismounting from his horse to pursue the path which lay beside, young pines impeding his progress, he stooped to gather a small branch, and falling insensibly into his accustomed reflections, "Like this tender thing," thought he, "my first knowledge above what is merely scientific, or earthly, sprung; it was nevertheless sweet and lovely, fresh and green, like this advancing higher, in more exalted and superior acknowledgements and perceptions of the wisdom of Providence!" He raised his sight upwards to those limits, bounding his physical, but not his mental vision; that, depending upon himself for its due exercise, he was aware could, by successive developments, soar even to those brighter spheres, which alike, in common with mankind, it was his noble privilege to inherit.

Descending from such lofty contemplations, his sight next encountered the ample spreading branches of an oak. "Emblem of a more perfect state," continued he, "it is to such we should aspire. How bounteous the Creator, to give to mankind lessons of wisdom in every object he beholds! How blessed," thought he, in viewing again the little branch of pine he still held in his hand, "if from this we arrive to the perfection of that magnificent tree; in mind expansive, like to that in form, faith and charity expanding and flourishing around us, as those branches, adorned with goodly leaves and fruit, springing from

its massive trunk ! In every work of nature we may unfold some hidden inward treasure, closed for ever from those who despise to seek it, but opened to those who, with humility, praise, and thanksgiving, strive to do so."

Perhaps no man in the world had less than Douglas the pharisaical precision of Methodism ; he was totally averse to their sudden and evanescent flights of enthusiasm, their frantic ravings of intemperate zeal in devotion, as if invoking a vindictive and implacable Deity ; to all such fanaticism and the narrow prejudices of religious schemes, or sectarian bigotry, he was an entire stranger. With a truly rational and scriptural faith, and an enlightened understanding, sustained by that happy equilibrium which marks the sure progress of the true Christian, he walked humbly but nobly forward towards the borders of eternity ; and amidst the impressions which swayed their hallowed influence over his mind, a sweet, an inward voice seemed to whisper, " Douglas, thy transgressions are forgiven ! Go on, pursue the path of virtue, thy reward is near."

Ah ! why cannot I more adequately represent those blessed and calm sensations the bosom feels when selfish affections, worldly pleasures, die within it, and are renounced altogether,—when it glows with the hope of being an agent in the hands of the Omnipotent, of dispensing around him the rich profusion of his blessings !

CHAPTER XIX.

“ The selfish heart deserves the pains it feels ;
More gen’rous sorrow while it sinks exalts,
And conscious virtue mitigates the pang.”

YOUNG.

THE nurse of little Rose having much desired the satisfaction of spending a few weeks with her mother, Mrs. Melbourne during the interval not wishing to put her into the hands of a stranger, with the consent of Douglas had allowed the child to accompany her. When, therefore, the time being more than expired for their remaining absent, and when, in company with Mrs. Melbourne, Douglas went to bring her home, in the anticipated delight of seeing his child, to shorten the interval, pursuing on foot a by-path leading direct to the cottage, he little dreamed how great was the surprise awaiting him.

The long-lost, loved Rosilia was to be shortly restored to his sight ; but what concern was mingled with the ecstasy of his feelings, to behold her on a sudden environed by the shades of death ! And whilst his eyes intently gazed upon her, all doubt as to that object he had seen before was instantly dispelled ! It

was not one resembling Rosilia, but it was Rosilia herself, of this he felt assured, who, in passing, had been accidentally thrown in his way in Baker-street, whilst supported on crutches; none other but she, in the momentary glance he had caught of her, could have had the power of conveying that charm to his soul, and of calling from him the rapturous exclamation he had uttered.

He little thought that, in acting the part of a tender guardian to his child, she had become as equally dear and necessary to her as a mother. That beloved girl who had formerly impressed her image upon his heart, re-animating from a temporary suspension of thought and motion, appeared before him, invested with the most enchanting graces, replete in goodness, in all that could render her lovely and ravishing to his sight! He had once offered himself a candidate for her hand, he had aspired to her affections, but had met with repulse, the cause of which existed with herself alone; conscious he had possessed the ability of rendering himself acceptable, otherwise, to her parents.

How greatly had he suffered, how cruel had been his disappointment! but it was from thence his pride and vanity had received their first check. It was truly to Rosilia, then, he owed that sense of his own unworthiness, that deep compunction, which had effected a change so salutary, and that secret calm of a self-approving conscience he now possessed. Such considerations, added to the first early and vivid

impressions awakened in her favour, gave her a complete ascendancy over him. How, therefore, did his heart throb with emotion when, during his stay at the Hermitage, Dr. Lovesworth, in his general praises of the De Brookes, paused to recount more particularly the virtues of Rosilia!

Douglas had frequent opportunities of seeing and conversing with her; but those short intervals of happiness only increased the regret he endured when no longer cheered by her presence. So much true respect united in his admiration and tenderness, that Rosilia felt herself encouraged to a perfect confidence in him, visible in her whole appearance, the attention given to his discourse, the spontaneous remark, the gentle and sweet smile; insomuch that Douglas, in acquiring humility, must have lost his former penetration, into what might gratify his vanity, not to have discovered the nature of Rosilia's sentiments towards him.

The dear little Rose had returned with her nurse, for the express purpose of acquiescing with the desire of Rosilia, who had wished to have her near her; and the day arrived when she was not only destined to part with that sweet child, but, as she imagined, the father also, and that perhaps for ever. She endeavoured to conceal the oppression of her heart, and succeeded tolerably well until the hour arrived that was to put her courage to the severest trial: her emotions were obvious.

The searching eye of Douglas seemed riveted upon

her, as if reading her inmost thoughts. She could not support that gaze, succeeded by one of such melting tenderness—a look that might have spoken volumes, and might have relieved her of every disquietude short only of language itself; it would have told her that he lived but in her. He asked himself, “Is it the parting from my little Rose that occasions such affectionate regret?” Powerful as were his own feelings, almost tempting him to throw himself at her feet, and make a full acknowledgment of his unvaried and never-ceasing love; yet his recollections of Harcourt, and circumstances therewith connected, the certainty of his expected arrival in England, restrained his utterance, threw a sort of spell over him, enchained by a species of self-command insupportably agonizing.

“Tell me, thou syren Hope, deceiver, say,
Where is the promised period of my woes?
Full three long lingering years have roll’d away,
And yet I weep, a stranger to repose.”

He flung himself into a chair. The benign Dr. Lovesworth observed the internal conflict in both, but most in Douglas, and felt almost persuaded as to the cause; but delicacy forbad his interference.

“My good Doctor,” at length said Douglas falteringly, “I am not quite so well to-day, and though I may appear whimsical in not having sooner yielded to your entreaty, yet I will do myself the pleasure of spending another day with you.”

How soul-reviving was the glance he next caught

from Rosilia's uplifted eloquent eye, containing all of human loveliness, and in its celestial grace apparently so full of anxious solicitude for himself; yet, however vivifying its effect, it could not disperse those mournful images, crowding upon his ideas, arising from the singularity of his untoward destiny—that strange fatality intervening between him and happiness, encompassing him by a reserve so mysterious, and so wholly foreign to his natural character: “Time,” thought he, “will discover what I now feel myself bound in honour to conceal.”

If Douglas had been less open to compassion, sympathy, and humanity; had he been, on the contrary, wholly absorbed in his own self-interests and gratifications, his heart might still have vibrated to a sense of joy; prompted by his ardent sentiments, he might have offered himself a second time to Rosilia, been accepted, and thus have insured to himself the hand of her so much beloved. But no, placing himself in the situation of Harcourt, he generously entered into the nature of his feelings; he was acquainted with his enthusiastic character, and, above all, he had received his friendly confidence: the fervent soul of his friend had been poured into his bosom, and his last parting exclamation on the shores of India had been, “Should you meet with the object of my idolatry, speak to her of me, use your interest for me.”

Such words continuing to sound upon his ears, what, therefore, remained for him but a total passive

ness of character and to teach himself submission to the irremediable decrees of an all-wise Providence?

A thousand times the following morning Rosilia asked herself the question, "I wonder if he will really go?" Her father had walked to the Hermitage, and she looked for his return with a wistful impatience. She bent her eye constantly towards that little pathway where he would first appear on his approach to the house. She saw him at last coming, accompanied by the Doctor; her heart told her that Douglas was gone, and its beatings increased as they drew near; she would fain have flown to meet them, but her timid fears restrained her. She heard the accents of her father—

"Douglas is gone!" said he; "I was just in time to see him ere he departed."

It was sufficient,—she had heard aright; and Rosilia sat for some time plunged in the deepest meditation: at length, arousing from her reverie, that innate pride of what was due to herself, that keen susceptibility, refinement, delicacy she possessed, alternately prevailing, suppressed the sigh; the conflict had been severe: yet that thoughts of her would sometimes cross the soul of Douglas she felt a persuasion beyond the possibility of doubt,—the conviction of which arose from the faithful recollection of every look, word, gesture he had unconsciously bestowed upon her. Perhaps, when he returned from Scotland, he might be again led to visit the Hermitage. However, uncertain as was every supposition she

formed upon the probabilities of the future, every consideration on her own account was laid aside by the claims her beloved Oriana held upon her affection.

She received a summons from her parents to participate in the perusal of a letter, which had just reached them, from her sister. Anxiously desirous for the unrestrained indulgence and sympathies of home, Oriana had expressed herself accordingly; at the Park, in order to make her company agreeable, she felt herself constantly under the trying necessity of suppressing her real feelings: but, above all, she longed to embrace her dear parents, to throw herself into their arms, and solicit their entire forgiveness for the past; to be cheered and soothed by the dear companion of her happier hours.

After discussing the point, the General determined to set off for London without delay, that he might not only take charge of Oriana himself, but render his personal thanks acceptable to Mr. Arden and his sister, for the kindness they had manifested towards his child, in having so long afforded her their protection, and also for their ready compliance in again yielding her to his wishes.

It was at the period of the year when the Doctor usually left his Hermitage; those attached friends therefore agreed to travel together; and after taking a temporary farewell of the loved inmates of the Bower, the General, accompanied by the Doctor, proceeded on his journey.

Mrs. De Brooke and Rosilia were consequently

left in complete solitude, with but little other resource than that derived from each other's company.

The time, however, did not pass heavily; on the contrary, it was usually varied by a succession of avocations, either pleasurable or useful, and the anticipation of a happy and speedy reunion.

The house stood in a situation so embowered, solitary, and remote from others, that when evening closed in, Mrs. De Brooke and her daughter, had they not reposed their security on the usual tranquillity of the neighbourhood, might have felt their courage forsake them; and the more so as at that time they happened to be deprived of an indoor man-servant—a circumstance chiefly regretted by them on account of a desire they entertained to make an excursion to the residence of Mrs. Boville.

In *tête-à-tête* with each other during the hour of twilight, the dusky shades of approaching night throwing upon all objects a sort of fearful solemnity, Mrs. De Brooke was informed that a young man had come to offer himself as a servant.

“It is very *à propos*,” said she to her daughter, “should he be found to suit, on account of the excursion we were meditating.”

Being shown into the apartment, Mrs. De Brooke questioned him very minutely relative to his capacities, and whether he was an experienced driver. He was a young man of good appearance, seemingly about the age of twenty-five. Mrs. De Brooke felt a prepossession in his favour. He produced several

certificates, all of which bore testimony to his merits, and she accordingly hired him.

During the whole period between his coming into and quitting the room, a sort of panic had seized Rosilia, who was not given to forbode evil, but was, in this instance, terrified by the idea that he might be one of a gang of robbers, and had presented himself at so late an hour with the intent only of gaining entrance into the house, and, as the dead of night advanced, of admitting his comrades. The rapidity and singular vivacity of his remarks, the large open eye, rolling upon her, the continual motion of his person, the foot advancing, then retreating,—were these gestures the effect of timid awkwardness, so often witnessed in his class upon their first recommendation of themselves? The bold and daring look contradicted the suggestion; and whenever Rosilia's eye, in spite of herself, strayed to where he stood, she was sensible of an inward shudder: "How precipitate," thought she, "has my mother been to engage him at such an hour!"

Her fears thus prevailing, she communicated them to her mother as soon as the object of them had retired, who not in the least participating in them, they gradually subsided; but for an interval only, for, when retired to her chamber, during the hours of repose, every sound intimidated her; the growling of their faithful dog, or a halfsuppressed bark, brought the looks of the new domestic again before her sight.

Her apprehensions were only dispersed by the early dawn, and rising, as was her custom, to breathe the fresh air of her garden, she a thousand times blamed herself for the unjust alarms she had allowed to conquer her better reason.

About two hours after breakfast the carriage, according to order, was punctually at the door, and the new driver in attendance, with a mien less appalling than on the preceding evening: assisted by his arm, Rosilia sprung joyously into the carriage that was to convey her to Grove Place, where Mrs. Melbourne, the friend of Douglas and the godmother of his child, resided.

After a few hours' ride they reached the habitation of Mrs. Boville, who, with her sister Mrs. Melbourne, received them with the greatest demonstrations of pleasure. The little Rose, immediately upon seeing Rosilia, recognised her friend of the cottage, and, springing to meet her, sought by a thousand playful caresses to show her joy, which was equally participated on the part of Rosilia, endeared to her, even ere she could have formed the faintest supposition to whom she belonged. How doubly engaging—what an attractive spell bound her now that her parentage was no longer hidden—revealed under such touching and interesting circumstances! The tender embrace she was wont to bestow, was now accompanied by a sensation of the heart so deep, so acute, as even to affect her to tears.

Mrs. Melbourne good-humouredly declared “she

was jealous of her god-daughter's fondness for Rosilia;" adding, "she truly believed the child felt for her a greater preference than for herself;" upon which Rosilia, raising the little cherub upon her lap, again clasped her to her bosom, and whilst still bending over that pledge of past affection, lent an attentive ear to the pride and pleasure with which Mrs. Melbourne expatiated upon the virtues of the father.

A pause ensuing, Mrs. De Brooke inquired the cause of his so suddenly leaving India, at a moment when, being appointed to the staff, his situation was so honourable and lucrative; and whether it had sprung from the pernicious effects of the climate upon his constitution, which appeared to have so much suffered.

Rosilia recollected to have put the same question upon her first meeting with Douglas at the cottage, and remembered the emotion he had then betrayed; for which reason she listened with greater curiosity to the account given by Mrs. Melbourne, who, however, being in total ignorance of the associations of ideas connected with the wound he had received in defence of Harcourt, and his repairing to England in consequence, had not the power to convey to Rosilia any conception of the nature of those deep conflicts he was necessitated, upon Harcourt's account, to endure for her sake. The friendship and the rivalship existing between Harcourt and himself, the painful and delicate situation in which he found himself placed, called for the sup-

pression of a passion which he gloried in, and which he conceived ennobled him. No wonder his emotions, as witnessed by Rosilia, became at times too powerful to conceal.

Mrs. Melbourne gave the relation of Douglas as she had heard it from her husband the Colonel, and which being entirely connected with the day of the repression of the insurrection, she dwelt forcibly upon the valour of Douglas, the exploits he had performed, and finally, the cause which had led to the wound he had received, reflecting upon him such infinite credit, and magnanimity, equalled only by the humanity and friendship which actuated the deed.

“Colonel Melbourne,” said she, in continuation, “did not leave the field until he was assured Douglas still breathed, and was taken to his tent. The general conduct of Douglas had invariably procured him the esteem of every one; but his bravery on this day, and the fatal consequences to himself likely to result from it, spread amidst the troops and officers in command the most intense enthusiasm and adoration of him. Never did any one submit to more protracted sufferings with greater patience, as the surgeon informed me, and to which alone he attributed his recovery, assisted by the change of climate. Thus I have explained the cause of his return to England, which had you asked him, he doubtless would not have given himself, as he modestly throws a veil over his best actions. No one is more silent respecting him-

self than Douglas, and yet no one is more universally admired.”

Had Mrs. Melbourne, during the course of her relation, occasionally raised her eyes to those of Rosilia, she would have found, by the tears glittering in them, and by the glowing colouring of her cheeks, how deeply her words had sunk into her heart.

CHAPTER XX.

“ One form assaults my sight, and chills my blood,
And shakes my frame!”

IN the society of those pleasing women, who failed not in their efforts to divert their guests, time would have passed most happily to Rosilia, but for one circumstance, which unfortunately threw a damp upon her cheerfulness.

While rambling one morning with her mother and friends around the Park and grounds, having accidentally met the nurse with her little favourite in her arms, and being desirous to remain awhile with the dear child, she loitered with her behind the party, who advanced considerably before her. The nurse, however, walking on with her charge, Rosilia, left alone, strolled leisurely forward, engaged in contemplating the charming scenes around her, when some one suddenly passed with a light and bounding step, whom her eye assured her was Melliphant. She could not be deceived,—the shape, the air, and gait were his.

Having advanced about a dozen yards, with the same quick motion as he had passed, he turned him-

self about. A wish to shun him, to avoid hearing the sound of his voice, supposing he would certainly accost her, caused her to avert from him her glance, and to slacken still more her pace; when, as if aware of her design, without taking apparent notice of her, he whistled to a small favourite dog of Mrs. Melbourne's that had been skipping before her, and attempted to allure the animal towards him, which answering to his call leaped instantly upon him.

Confused, perplexed, Rosilia conceived he was awaiting her approach, and that those accents she had hoped never more to hear would again meet her ear. He had stopped, however, and when she looked again he had disappeared behind an abrupt winding in the walk.

Turning immediately on the side leading to the mansion, in the fear of again seeing him, Rosilia quickened her steps, and reached the house shortly after the ladies accompanying her mother.

Perhaps no circumstance could have happened at that moment more unpropitious to Rosilia than the sight of Melliphant. He had flitted before her, like a dark phantom, disturbing her imagination, chasing from her bosom hopes inspired by the sweet and flattering expectation of a happier destiny than had hitherto been her lot. Alas! her evil genius hovering near, diffused a sombre hue over those scenes which had before breathed upon her sense so full of light, beauty, and loveliness!

As soon as Mrs. De Brooke had withdrawn to the

private apartment assigned her, Rosilia, in much perturbation, joined her.

“Whom do you think I have seen, my dear mother,” said she, “of all persons in the world I should have the least desired to have seen?—Mr. Melliphant!”

The distressed accents in which these words were spoken, caused her mother to suspend the arrangements she was making.

“My dear,” replied she, turning hastily about, “you may be mistaken; I can hardly think you have seen Mr. Melliphant, but somebody, doubtless, who resembles him; your father, from good authority, having heard that, to shun the importunities of his creditors, he some time since fled from the kingdom.”

“But the gait, air, and figure,” returned Rosilia, “were so completely his, that I feel persuaded I could not be mistaken.”

She then accurately described his manner of passing, and of noticing the dog that was with her.

“Extraordinary as it may seem,” added Mrs. De Brooke, “I am still of opinion, by his not addressing you, that your sight deceived you.”

Nearly doubting her faculty of vision, Rosilia began to hope it might be as her mother said.

“Besides,” rejoined Mrs. De Brooke, “quiet your mind, my dear, on that score; for whether it was Melliphant or not, detected as his views and character recently have been, you have nothing more to apprehend from him, or his further persecution of you.”

Admitting the justice of these consolatory reasonings, Rosilia descended to the dining-room, where her kind friends had already assembled.

In the course of the evening, with the view of promoting the amusement of her guests, Mrs. Boville led them into an apartment they had not yet seen, and which she styled her favourite chamber, where when alone she usually spent the greater part of her time. It was neatly furnished, being wholly void of any article of gaudy or costly value, with the exception of an inlaid cabinet of ivory and ebony, and some portraits on the walls.

The first of these that Mrs. Boville pointed to the notice of Mrs. De Brooke, was that of her deceased husband, General Boville. The countenance bore a benignant and gracious expression. "Do you not trace some resemblance there," inquired Mrs. Boville, "to one to whom I have the honour of being step-mother?"

"Yes, truly," replied Mrs. De Brooke, "the resemblance to Dr. Lovesworth is striking."

"General Boville was his father," added she.

"Can he be the same Boville whose name, merits, and qualities have been so often repeated and extolled to me during my early years?" asked Mrs. De Brooke.

"The Boville who married my father's sister, but whose decease left him an early widower."

A crowd of ideas flashed upon the memory of Mrs. Brooke, which received confirmation when, in

passing her eye to the portrait beyond, she beheld traits never to be forgotten,—those indelibly imprinted on her filial memory.

“ My mother !” she exclaimed ; “ surely that portrait was designed for my mother !” and she would have sunk to the earth but for the timely support of Mrs. Boville.

The painting which caused her so sudden an emotion was indeed a finished resemblance of her much-loved mother, the loss of whom had been so recent, and whom she was so deeply bewailing, at the time De Brooke made his appearance at her father’s parsonage, introduced by letters from an aged officer to the much-esteemed Vicar of Whitby. That aged officer, General Boville, being no other than the brother of her mother, and her uncle ; he was also the late husband of Mrs. Boville, who became his second wife shortly after the period that De Brooke left Portugal on his return to England ; Mrs. Boville and the General, therefore, were entire strangers to each other.

“ Your mother !” exclaimed Mrs. Boville in her turn ; “ can it be possible that the sister of my late husband bore to you such near relationship ?” — throwing her arms round Mrs. De Brooke, who, chasing the tears she had dropped to the memory of her parent, flew to meet the embrace of Mrs. Boville, who, from the kindness of her disposition, felt nearly equal warmth and delight, as if the ties of blood, and not those of marriage merely, in reality entitled her

to use the appellation of niece. "How rejoiced I am," continued she, "to find in Mrs. De Brooke one so closely connected with my respected and ever-to-be-regretted Boville; and that it is now, though late, permitted me to claim relationship with her and her lovely daughters; the eldest of whom it is still reserved for me to see,—the youngest," rising from her seat as she spoke, "having already my friendship,—sweet, charming, and amiable as she is,—the grand-niece of my Boville!"

Rosilia flew towards her, and cordially returned the warm salutation she received.

"My excellent husband the General," said his widow, addressing Mrs. De Brooke, "entertained for your father a species of veneration as the earliest friend of his youth; and that the regard was mutual, the interchange of marriage in their respective families abundantly proves; it being also, it appears, a younger sister of your father's who was the first wife of Boville, of which union our esteemed Lovesworth is the issue."

This interesting explanation of family connections given by Mrs. Boville occasioned an *éclaircissement* exceedingly gratifying to Mrs. De Brooke and Rosilia. Doctor Lovesworth, for whom they had mutually, with the whole of their family, felt so great a partiality, was found to be the cousin-german of Mrs. De Brooke.

"With what happiness," exclaimed she, "shall I advance to take the Doctor by the hand when next I

see him, and greet him by the appellation of cousin! The son of my proper aunt, and myself the daughter of his aunt, are we not doubly linked in the ties of consanguinity? What a singular and pleasing discovery!"

Deeply absorbed in the delight such contemplations opened to her, Rosilia entirely forgot the uneasiness caused by the sudden and unexpected sight of Melliphant (or one who so much resembled him) amongst the groves in which she had been rambling. "'Tis truly a happy day," thought she.

"And what will the dear General say," exclaimed Mrs. Boville, "when he returns and finds us all united in an agreeable family party? I shall enjoy with all my soul his surprise."

"And the dear good Lovesworth, now my cousin," rejoined Mrs. De Brooke, "how charming,—how delightful,—to claim kindred with him, and to hear him express his feelings,—his satisfaction, at the discovery! But pray, Mrs. Boville, or my dear aunt, I should now say, how came it that my cousin bears the name of Lovesworth, instead of his father's? This change of name has been the cause of my being so long kept in ignorance of our mutual connection."

"The circumstance has arisen from Boville having had two sisters, one of whom, it appears, married your father, the other Dean Lovesworth, who, independently of his high church preferment, possessed considerable property: being an excellent and pious

ecclesiastic, and having no issue, he conceived a great partiality for the young Boville, his wife's nephew, who was frequently with him, and finding that he possessed abilities and uncommon piety for his years, he took a delight in opening his young mind early to the study of Divinity, which so much increased his liking for him, that he was led, finally, to adopt him for his heir, and to request him to assume his name.

“The death of the worthy Dean,” continued Mrs. Boville, “was shortly after succeeded by that of his widow, which is the cause that Lovesworth is so amply endowed; and perhaps wealth thus accumulated from both father and uncle never descended to one so fully desirous and competent of making an honourable and charitable use of it; accounting himself an instrument in the hands of Providence, he is the poor man's friend, distributing blessings wherever he goes. I am quite proud, I assure you, notwithstanding our ages are not far distant, of calling him son, now that I have the happiness of knowing him personally, and have been eye-witness of his virtues. Having quitted Portugal on the decease of his father, I was solicitous to fix my retreat in this part of the United Kingdom, for the purpose of being within the vicinity of my step-son's charming retreat.

“It is about a year,” she added, “since he indicated to me the possibility of my obtaining this place. From his recommendation, I accompanied him

to the spot, which I found suited me so well, as to leave me no other consideration than the necessary arrangements to be made previous to entering ; upon which Lovesworth told me the bargain was already struck, that the place was mine, and that all I had to do was to take possession. I was enchanted by the unexpected pleasure he had prepared for me : and so greatly had he attended to all that might in the least interest or gratify me, that, in conducting me over the grounds, he brought me to a spot, though distant and without the precincts, hedged in as if apparently forming a part of them. Nothing could be more retired, more isolated, more wholly obscured than that small recess ; a sort of solemn feeling took possession of me upon perceiving we approached a cenotaph, bearing on the top an urn ; an irresistible impulse led me to inspect the inscription ; I bent over it, and found, to my surprise, it had been erected to the memory of my husband, by his son, the filial and affectionate Lovesworth. Such an act, you may conceive, had its due weight upon my feelings ; but, alas ! though it reminded me of the loss I had sustained, and caused my tears to reflow, the remains of my departed husband were not there,—they were left upon a foreign shore. Nevertheless, I was not the less sensible of this testimony of respect to his father, and attention to myself. It has tended also to render the spot invaluable and dear to me beyond measure.

“ The place where the monument is erected con-

tains a vault, marked by a mouldering tomb, in which are interred the remains of some ancient descendants, inhabiting probably this house ere it underwent modern repair,—and which gives to the spot, overgrown with brushwood and brambles, and planted with cypress, a sort of melancholy desolation, calculated to impress the weak-minded with terror. Superstitious as are the whole of my humble dependants, they positively assert the place is haunted, and that even at noonday they have been at times alarmed by the unnatural appearance and disappearance of one, in a dark garb, who flits here and there, without ever letting the sound of his voice be heard in accosting any one.”

Mrs. De Brooke exchanged looks with her daughter, who immediately recollected how strangely the object, which struck her as being Mr. Melliphant, vanished from her sight. Since it was not unusual for the domestics to see a similar appearance, she now began to adopt more implicitly her mother's opinion, and to feel persuaded the object she had seen might be some solitary stranger, residing near, who felt himself often tempted to wander amidst the beautiful avenues; in which idea she became still more confirmed when, in reply to her mother's question relative to the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, Mrs. Boville answered, “that the seat of Sir Arthur Melliphant was the one nearest in situation to her own, but she had not made acquaintance with him, the family having been always absent

from the country since she had taken up her abode in it."

"In her ladyship," added Mrs. Boville, "I promise myself a desirable neighbour; but as to the male part of the family, report does not speak highly in their favour."

In similar discourse time passed, until the hour of rest called them to retire. Each separated with many cordial attestations of friendship, and in the anticipation of renewing their pleasing conversation the following morning.

CHAPTER XXI.

“ Fleecy locks and black complexion
Cannot forfeit nature’s claim ;
Skins may differ, but affection
Dwells in white and black the same.”

COWPER.

THE General having arrived in London had the happiness of again embracing his daughter ; but at the same time was made sensible of a mingled pain in beholding the change in her appearance.

Ever of a delicate temperament, it seemed that the last severe trial she had undergone had tended to undermine her general health, and the treatment recommended by her medical attendant was considered most efficacious to ensure her from decline. Oriana testified the greatest delight upon seeing her father, and consoled him with the hope of becoming perfectly recovered when she should experience the quiet and repose of home.

Having passed a couple of days in London, he would gladly have escaped its noise and bustle, and have flown to the shades again, had not an event occurred of a nature wholly unexpected and extraordinary.

Walking one day towards the Horse Guards, he

was led to enter the War Office, when one of the clerks in attendance presented him with a letter. The handwriting was none of the best, and the letter was ill-folded. "My dear Massa!" were the first words that met his eye, and, in turning over the paper, he found it signed "Your faithful Robert."

What a delightful and agreeable surprise,—what pleasure awaited him; he was about hearing intelligence of his kind, devoted, and honest black,—to receive fresh testimony of his continued friendship! Running his eye over the scrawl, though he had some difficulty to understand it, he was, perhaps, even more gratified to trace those ingenuous sentiments and expressions of fidelity from his old servant, than if they had been traced by a minister of state, and conveyed the glad tidings of some distinguished preferment.

The passage more immediately elucidating the object of his writing was as follows: "If when dis comes to hand, Massa take de trouble of giving a call at No. 3, Gray's Inn Road, he will bestow great obligation on his old Robert, who is vexed about dis letter, hoping it will be received; has someting to say me cannot write, but will tell it when me sees goot Massa. So pray come as soon as convenient."

Less curious to learn the information Robert proposed giving him than desirous of again seeing him, the General on quitting the War Office called the first coach he met with, and, drove to the place appointed. No sooner did he alight than Robert flew

to meet him. The poor fellow sobbed out his joy, insomuch that De Brooke was nearly himself melted to tears.

After many inquiries after "dear Misses and de young ladies, Miss Ory and Rosa," he conducted the General into a small but neatly furnished apartment, where, after seating him in a large elbow-chair, being in the presence of his former master, he stood respectfully before him, and could scarcely be prevailed upon to sit down.

"Your letter indicates," said the General, "that you have something of moment to communicate; but before talking of business, let me express my satisfaction, Robert, upon this our now fortunate meeting, and relieve my heart of what is at present nearest to it. To be brief, I live in Wales; I have a small establishment there, and am just at this moment in want of a person like yourself, to conduct my farm, and take the management of the arable land. 'Tis you, my good Robert, are my man; come then, my long lost friend, whom I have often regretted ever to have parted with; come and end your days amongst us, and confer upon me one of the greatest enjoyments I am at this time capable of knowing."

Robert smiled; and it was a smile of such simple candour that the General thought the point had met with his entire acquiescence. "My dear Robert," added he, "you are grown a spruce fellow; your coat is as good as mine, and your linen nearly as fine—with that brooch too,—I suspect you are courting!"

“ No, no, Massa; Robert knows better at his age; no more wife for poor Robert; Robert live single now.”

“ I fear, my dear Robert, I have been too hasty in my remarks; forgive me; I would not injure your quick feelings for the world. Relate to me your adventures since parting, now, or at any other time; but promise me this, that you will come and end your days with me.”

“ How like dat is wat you said when young, Massa,” rejoined Robert, composing himself; “ me never forget it; you used to lob poor black boy very much, and used to say, when you grew a man, you would share your fortunes wit him. In right you were de natural heir of your father Sir Aubrey, but he cut off poor Massa; Robert was very grateful all de same, and loved Massa better than had he been rich man; and wat could he do, dan serve Massa in distress, dat would have shared all his fortune wit him, had he not been wheedled out of it? Massa deceived in his family, but not deceived in his servant. Massa again offers Robert to come and share his fortune wit him.”

“ Yes !” exclaimed the General, “ it will confer upon me a happiness unspeakable; your servitude shall be light, and we will try and forget the past by never talking of it.”

“ Massa, Robert means to share his fortune wit you, but he cannot go and live wit you, he has concerns to take care of far away by sea; and dis brings

me to wat me want to say to you. Robert is now very rich ; has earned great deal,—large wealth ; but me cannot live in great house ; me cannot drive fine coach. If Massa den will keep his word, and share wit Robert, his fortune now is all Massa's."

The ambiguity which Robert threw into his discourse prevented the General from thoroughly understanding him ; but he was at no loss when Robert, upon unlocking a bureau, placed a parchment on a table before him, requesting him to sign it with his name.

Amazed, surprised at what struck upon his sense as an act of the most magnanimous and generous description, yet still doubting whether in his conjecture he was right or wrong, the General exclaimed with emotion, "What can this mean? You are too sudden in your operations, Robert ; let me read before I sign, and I will tell you afterwards if my conscience can well acquit me of doing so."

"Read, Massa, read ; but if you object to do as Robert would have you, it will not be to make Robert happy, and die in peace, as you would wish him."

Making himself quickly acquainted with the contents of the parchment, the General raised his eyes to fix them upon Robert, with an expression of the most unbounded admiration. From what he discovered, he found it to be regularly drawn up according to the rules of law ; a property specified, amassed by the sale of lands, farm, tavern, at the Cape of Good

Hope, together with the addition of a smaller sum in ready cash, made the amount of £14,000; the whole of which by legal and correct attestations was made over to himself, duly signed by Robert in the presence of witnesses, who had also put their oaths and seals, and which awaited only his own signature to receive confirmation*.

“My dear Robert,” ejaculated the General, after a pause, during which he had been literally speechless from astonishment, “what in the world am I to conceive of this? you would beggar yourself to enrich me! One would imagine you wished to try whether I have strength of mind, honour, and probity sufficient to resist so great a temptation.”

“No, goot Massa,” returned the black in imploring accents; “but it has been for you dat me owe having got so much; my zeal to make amends for all your past gootness: me have made it over to you, and if you refuse it, me shall die miserable.”

“Die miserable unless I consent to rob you—to deprive you, Robert, of all your honest and industrious earnings! But it is immense what you have acquired in the space of these last twelve or fourteen years that we have been separated; and it appears to me, in the noble donation you would bestow upon me, that you have not reserved even the smallest mite for yourself. The mists that surrounded me on

* Founded on fact.

the first aspect of this affair having cleared away, I will do as you would have me, and be proudly indebted to my Robert,—to my old trustworthy servant,—for this great accession of fortune to myself and family; but with this provision, that you allow a handsome settlement to be made out of it for yourself.”

“ Even the fourth part, Massa, would be more dan me would know what to do wit.”

“ Think you, noble friend, I could enjoy it under the consciousness that you had left yourself destitute for my sake !”

“ Instead of making conditions wit Master, me wished to feel myself obliged to him for wat he might tink proper to pension me off wit upon its becoming his own. Me know wery well Massa, and how he would be glad to provide for Robert.”

“ Yes! that I will make a handsome provision for you, my confiding Robert, since you magnanimously entrust me with the charge of doing so, even, strange as it may appear, out of your own property. Give me the pen; I will sign, if it was with the view only of transmitting to posterity this deed of my Robert’s—that it may be known to the honour of your race, the dark-coloured African, that a negro, once the servant of a master, himself a servant of royalty, owed to his fidelity and attachment a re-establishment of fortune; that it was through him, his former valet, earned by the labour and sweat of his brow, that he acquired

that handsome sufficiency, of which the loss of his command, without an adequate indemnity, and his loss of hereditary rights, had alike deprived him."

Having taken the pen and put his signature, to the unbounded satisfaction of Robert, the General added, "The deed is done! you have now made over to me the whole of your property; and now, my worthy friend, satisfy my curiosity by explaining to me the means which enabled you to accumulate so large a sum."

"Upon leaving your service, Massa, my heart almost broke to quit you and dear Misses and young ladies; me grieved so, me believe it would have cost me my life, had not some lucky thought come into my head, and it was dat thought which gave me courage, and made me more hearty to say, Farewell, Massa! for it was while talking to you about going, dat it crossed me all at once to go back to Cape Town, and try and find old Massa, if he was alive; he who parted wit me to your kind mother, God bless her! De money you made me take of you in parting was de cause of great project succeeding, as me got on board a ship bound to New South Wales, and which de crew told me always stopped at Cape Town. Me arrived safe, and though almost forgot all about it, found at last de inn—large inn—where Massa's wife lived. She liked Robert when lilly negro boy, and was glad to see him come back a man. Her husband lived to return home, but fell sick again, and at last died,—all de affairs

going to ruin whilst he lay long time sick ; no proper goot person to look after tings. I told her how it was me came to come back, and said, me should be glad to serve her, and give her satisfaction ; upon which she took me to act as under-waiter. By degrees I came to be head-waiter ; she praised my diligence, told me I brought her goot luck ; de profits came in scanty before, but now de earnings had never been so great. She showed me such confidence, dat she entrusted at last all her affairs to me ; honoured me by saying such kind, civil things, Robert sometimes forgot himself, and showed his liking also. She had been too young for her late husband, and though a goot deal older dan me, I began to tink she might condescend to marry me. Me had laid by all my earnings and presents made me by travellers stopping wit us from all corners of de earth, out of which me purchased a little farm, which brought me in good stocks ; my cattle and herds increased, togeter wit harvest produce. All as it came in and multiplied, me laid by, intending it all to bring over to England to goot Massa,—because being all my own, defrauded no one, did injustice to no man. Tawny negro man and white woman took deir meals togeder ; oder servants tought me as goot as a massa ; and when Misses found dey respected me, she began by praising my polite manners to strangers, my honesty and fidelity ; it even gave her de tought to marry me. Me gave her no reason to repent of it. Me showed her gratitude to de last day of her life.

Poor ting! she did not live long to bless Robert," wiping his eyes as he spoke; "and having no friend left, my thoughts den turned upon goot last Massa in England. All my wife's property became mine. I raised a handsome stone over her grave, and after wept sorely for her. Me had no spirit to go on wit de business; me determined to sell all off at once, and wit all de produce of it, come back to England, and search for Massa, hoping goot Providence would bless and reward my design; and while coming over in de ship, de words dat Massa used to say, when a youth, was always running in my head: 'Robert, when I grow up, and become rich, you shall share my fortunes.' Me became quite joyful at tinkin' it was about to come to pass; and dere Massa now is found, and Robert quite happy."

His simple story finished, the General endeavoured to chase the tears that, in spite of himself bedewed his eyes; turning them next upon Robert, "What a soul of brightness," thought he, "does that sable form inclose!" To suppress the further emotions that were rising, he arose from his seat, and laid his hand upon the heart of the negro.

"Robert," exclaimed he, "your reward will be found there—in that heart, where the bliss of angels and heaven already dwell! The sons of Afric are surely blessed above us, possessing such superior warmth of affection, and perhaps capacities of no meaner order. Well, Robert," he added, "you will

live with me henceforth, and share all that you have made me worth."

"No, dat cannot be," said he, wiping tears from his eyes; "I must refuse Massa dat, and return to de Cape, now my business is done dat brought me from it. De gratitude due to my wife says, Robert should never forsake de spot where her ashes lay."

Admiring a sentiment, which he found to be too strongly ingrafted to meet with opposition in one of such a decided firmness as Robert, the General, with the utmost persuasion of reasoning of which he was capable, could not prevail upon the self-devoted black to accept out of what had belonged to himself more than £2000, upon which he declared he should be rich, as it would bring him in about an income of £100 per annum, and much more than ample for his greatest wants. This being settled, the General opened his arms to embrace him who had manifested towards him an act so generous, great, and noble! He could scarcely believe but that it was a dream, to be so suddenly enriched through the instrumentality of his former servant—his faithful Robert.

Reflecting upon this singular adventure, he strolled on, and bent his steps to Grosvenor-square, to the residence of his sister—to that house containing for the most part the splendid furniture, portraits, plate, the property of the late Sir Aubrey, and to which, by legal right of primogeniture, he was heir; having, however, passed from him to his sister,

through her they would go into the general mass belonging to the Ardens.

The parchment I have in my pocket, thought the General, will give me but half as many hundreds per annum, as Mr. Arden in his own right, independent of my sister, possesses thousands, and yet I would not exchange with him; a free gift from this noble-minded fellow contains within it that which is invaluable, above every consideration of self-interest; and more so accompanied by the conviction that Robert, in bestowing it upon me, experiences such happiness as, in accepting it from him, I can never feel."

This first ebullition of feeling subsiding, the General, more calmly and deeply reflecting on the property thus forced upon him, felt the strongest desire to restore it; but when he recalled to mind the looks, gestures, and supplicating accents of Robert, he felt sensibly aware that, in opposing his generous views, he should aggrieve and render him most truly miserable. Entering, therefore, upon a solemn covenant with himself, he resolved to consider the property thus made over to him as a sacred gift, a trust for which he was accountable to his God for every shilling he expended of it.

In his days of youth, unthinking as he had been, he accused himself with bitterness in having disbursed with profusion and even wantonness; now, on the contrary, with the experience and discretion he had gained, the property amassed by Robert could

not have fallen into the hands of any more disposed to make a religious and proper use of it. He endeavoured to calm his mind, and to silence those ideas, which arose in spite of him, as to whether in honour he could accept this money of his past servant. Alas! thought he, high or low, are we not all brethren under one common Father, and in the sight of heaven who may stand superior to Robert?

Having no love of riches, and having become content with his solitude, the utmost poverty or affliction to which he could possibly have been reduced would have been esteemed light and easy to bear, rather than have raised himself from such condition at the expense of any individual whatever. Muni- ficent as he was in his own disposition in the con- ferring of favours, his acceptance, under the circum- stances we have described, of the fortune bestowed by Robert, he found upon reasoning with himself to be perfectly consistent with the most scrupulous principles of uprightness and probity: as he could not reproach himself in this instance, so neither did he indulge in an elation of mind on the occasion.

He dined at the Ardens', rejoiced at being with his child, but found in himself no disposition to make known his new acquisition. In seeking to dispel the affecting impressions prevailing over him, if, after intervals of slight abstraction, he seemed more than usually gay, Mr. and Mrs. Arden concluded it proceeded from the pleasure he felt in being put again in the possession of his daughter, as they well

knew his paternal affection and pride for either child was such, that it had never been with his entire consent that he had renounced the society of Oriana, whose declining health made Mrs. Arden desirous to renounce her charge, considering also home to be the most appropriate place for invalids, being there more abundantly supplied with those attentions the nature of the indisposition might require.

Much, therefore, as the General's solicitude for his daughter led him to wish to settle her in the purer atmosphere of the country, yet he resolved not to leave town whilst his much-esteemed and attached Robert inhabited it; and he accordingly delayed his departure until the ship which had brought Robert again set sail on its return, bearing with its crew a noble passenger in the person of the high-principled and affectionate African. The last affecting adieu having been given, the General prolonged his stay to see the vessel under weigh: as it spread its sails, he viewed it glide down the Thames with feelings such as those alone experience who part from a much-loved relative, about to be divided by interminable waters.

“His sense of duty takes him,” reflected the General; “it is that alone which severs us; and he bears with him a pure conscience, a soul in that sable form such as kings might envy! May Heaven bless thee, my noble friend, my noble Robert!” ejaculated he, deeply affected, as he turned from the banks of that extensive river to pursue his route

back, to meet his daughter, who had shared with him also in the happiness and regret of seeing and parting from Robert, and whom he now conducted to the travelling carriage that was to convey her to the peaceful Bower.

CHAPTER XXII.

“ To walk as spirits do, in brakes all day ;
And, when the darkness comes, to glide in paths
That lead to graves, and in the silent vault.”

DRYDEN.

It may be well supposed that the General, communicative as he was in character, as soon as he left London and its suburbs behind him, rejoiced to unburthen his mind upon the pleasing subject which engrossed it,—and which naturally continued the chief topic of discussion between father and daughter until they entered Glamorganshire, every object of which county affected Oriana with the pleasing but mournful recollections of the past.

The road through which they travelled lay not very far distant from the residence of Mrs. Boville, and as the last accounts received by the General from Mrs. De Brooke had been directed thence,—from the probability of his wife and Rosilia being prevailed upon to remain there during his absence, and as, at any rate, it would not lead him far from his direct route to the Bower, he determined to make a call there, to introduce Oriana to Mrs. Melbourne, with whom he was better acquainted than with her sister, —having, of course, no idea of what had happened during his absence.

“ I have already spoken to you of Douglas,” said the General to Oriana on the way to Mrs. Boville’s, “ the old suitor of your sister ; for whom, notwithstanding his rejection, I could never divest myself of the idea she has ever since retained a *penchant*, although constantly endeavouring to surmount it. He has returned home a most finished gentleman,—an honour to any court, where his merits would shine in their proper lustre. I should heartily rejoice did he propose a second time for your sister ; for all I can say falls short of the praise you will hear of him from Mrs. Melbourne ; even our good Lovesworth has caught the infection, for from the time he made acquaintance with Douglas he could talk of nothing else ; and let me tell you, Lovesworth is no superficial observer. I related to him the cause of Rosilia’s formerly declining his addresses, to which he made answer, it was what might have been expected on her part ; admitting that she had authentic reason to accuse him of irregularities of conduct, an ample motive on her side to preclude any congenial intercourse. ‘ General,’ added he, ‘ his intrinsic worth lay hidden under a heap of embers, to burst out with an increased, vivid, and lasting splendour. That a partiality still exists in each for the other is very obvious, notwithstanding their mutual efforts to conceal it. And I never saw two minds calculated to assimilate in conjugal harmony and unison more completely than that of my dear Rosilia and the accomplished Douglas.’ I must

confess, since that conversation with the penetrating Lovesworth, I have been anxiously desirous of an opportunity to join their hands, feeling assured that motives of delicacy alone keep Douglas from approaching."

The house as they drew near presented an appearance of quietude unusual for the season; the General therefore concluded his wife and daughter had returned to the Bower, and that the ladies inhabiting the place were absent from home: the door was opened by a female servant, whose looks might have foreboded bad intelligence had she not suddenly disappeared to inform her mistress, as the General supposed, of his being there. He meant but to stay half an hour, which would afford Oriana not only an introduction to the ladies but a salutary rest, ere he proceeded to rejoin his family at the Bower. The servant returning, with an air still involving mystery, conducted the General and Oriana into a large dining parlour, on the ground floor, saying one of the ladies would shortly attend them.

A quarter of an hour elapsed and no one had yet appeared; a sort of melancholy presentiment took possession of the General, which he tried to dissipate by viewing objects from the window: another long interval having passed, he feared, on account of Oriana's health, the night dews might fall ere he reached the Bower.

As he was thus reflecting, the door at last opened, and Mrs. Melbourne advanced. Her aspect, and the

accent in which she accosted him, were dejected in the extreme. He was about presenting Oriana to her, but anticipating his design, with a tender yet sorrowful air, she walked towards her, and taking her by the hand, she seated herself beside her.

“Your daughter, General,” said she, “(as I doubt not this young lady is,) from the delicacy of her appearance, is doubtless suffering under the fatigue of her journey.” Then casting a look of strong sympathy on Oriana, her countenance relapsed into abstraction; and soon after, rising suddenly from her seat, “General,” said she, “will you do me the favour of a moment’s conference in another apartment?” when leading the way, the General followed, fully convinced that it was to be a participator with her in some disastrous calamity.

“For Heaven’s sake, Mrs. Melbourne,” exclaimed he, “what has happened? Speak, tell me! Is it you or myself who is to be condoled with? am I sent here to sympathize with you in affliction, or is it myself who am the object of it? My wife! my child, Rosilia—what of them?”

Though Mrs. Melbourne in her looks and manner expressed the utmost compassion, she did not let one word drop that could lessen the fearful anticipations of the General, who, with a suspense nearly frantic, awaited her further utterance.

“One or the other is lost to me for ever!” exclaimed he; “either dead or dying!”

“No, General,” returned she, recovering her

speech, "it is not as you suppose. Mrs. De Brooke truly has undergone a great shock; she is happily with us, and Mrs. Boville is now endeavouring to console her, being even at this time in the greatest anguish on account of—" Mrs. Melbourne found herself at a loss to proceed, but gathering breath, she added, "the sudden disappearance of her daughter."

"Of my Rosilia!" exclaimed the distracted father; "where?—how long?—at what time?"

"She went in the afternoon to ramble amidst the grounds, and we have not seen her since. Every servant, male and female, in and out of the house, has been sent in various directions in search of her, but without success. We were fearful she might have fallen into a sheet of water beyond the shrubbery: it has been dragged, but to no purpose."

"My dear Mrs. Melbourne," added the General, "excuse the former bluntness of my words and actions; but, as you now represent the matter, I do not see but that this apparent evil admits of hope, knowing the turn of my daughter's mind: beguiled by her love for natural objects, taught by the Doctor, she has wandered on, heedless of the hours, and has doubtless lost her way. Will you have the goodness to lead me to my wife, and in the meanwhile prepare Oriana for seeing her mother without her sister, using what discretion you may think proper to quiet her fears and to console her for the disappointment?"

In ascending to meet Mrs. De Brooke, the General thought, "What an eventful journey has this been

to me! what good news was I bringing home—and how little did I anticipate my joy was to receive so cruel a check! Could I really believe Fate intended me such a blow as the final loss of my child, how readily would I throw up fortune, all that Robert has given me, and even all that I possess in the world, for the restoration of my child!”

On being admitted to his wife, the General was soon apprised of the dreadful surmises she herself entertained,—that it was Melliphant in reality whom her child had seen; and that he had conveyed her away, was a supposition that had taken complete possession of her.

Ever fond of wandering alone, as her father had hinted, to indulge in all the romantic luxuriance of her taste, she had gone forth, carrying with her a small portfolio, inclosing paper and materials for designing, with a heart perfectly at rest, and unapprehensive of danger of any sort. She proceeded on her way, meditating upon the singular discovery just made with regard to her mother's new-found relatives in Mrs. Boville and her excellent Dr. Lovesworth,—the former connected merely by marriage; and the latter, whom she so greatly revered, for whom she had ever borne so great a partiality,—how rejoiced was she to think she might claim kindred with him even by the nearer tie of consanguinity!

She thus pursued her way, occasionally stopping to see whether she could discover the monument she had heard described by Mrs. Boville, and which had

been raised by that friend upon whose virtues she had been meditating, the filial Dr. Lovesworth, to the memory of his father, her mother's uncle,—the hope of discovering which had tempted her to bend her footsteps so far alone, for the purpose of transmitting the interesting epitaph as well as the monument to her sketch-book.

Having at length discovered the object of her search, she boldly drew near, read the inscription, and insensibly gave way to that tender melancholy a scene so solemn might inspire. Retreating to a little distance, she seated herself in a situation the most convenient for executing the drawing she was about to make. After a little interval, becoming deeply intent upon her work, somebody from behind, as with electric swiftness, sprung violently upon her, cast rapidly a bandage around her sight, lifted her from the ground, and running with her a few paces, stopped for an instant, and descended, to all appearance, into some dark cavity or hollow place. The terrified girl, paralysed, uttered but one shriek, and fainting away, became lost for an interval to all that passed around her.

In a word, it was Melliphant himself who had descended that vault of death, with the unhappy Rosilia, experiencing the utmost excess of savage joy at having at last effected his long-planned infamous project. Rosilia was now completely delivered into his power, and such a moment made ample amends

to him for months of restless and impatient watchfulness.

Provided with materials to procure a light, the gleams of the lamp, spreading its pale rays over the gloomy and comfortless habitation of the dead, with the cold damp exhalations, served to recall to existence Melliphant's defenceless victim, when, it not being his design to make himself instantly known, he sprung upwards, carefully closing after him the tomb which inclosed his treasure.

Finding an unearthly stillness reign, not even a breath denoting a living creature near, Rosilia tore the bandage from her temples and attempted to rise, when what amazement, what horror filled her breast, upon casting her eyes around, to find she was a prisoner in a remote sepulchre, amid the ashes of the departed !

Her first object was to seek whether any means were afforded for her escape. She ascended to the door of the vault, and made use of all the force she was mistress of to remove the obstacles which shut from her the light of day: every effort proved in vain, and served but to exhaust the more her feeble powers. She called, she exerted to its utmost the strength of her voice, sending forth repeated and loud exclamations, which she hoped might reach the ear of some distant passer-by; nought, however, met her ear in reply, but the reverberation through the vault of each piercing shriek she uttered. Aware of

the superstitious fears entertained by the domestics of Mrs. Boville, she feared she had no chance of being extricated from her dismal situation through their means, since they would doubtless diligently keep themselves far beyond the sound of her cries.

Dreading the probability of having fallen into the hands of Melliphant, she would rather by far continue to support a captivity, dreary and dismal as it was, than be rescued by one for whom at that moment she felt the most unconquerable antipathy. "From the remains of the silent dead," thought she, "in this lone sepulchre, what have I to fear? how preferable to the company of him who could act towards me in so outrageous and brutal a manner!"

Resigning herself to the situation in which she was placed, her soul insensibly, by inward prayer, acquired strength. The Deity was not invoked in vain; His strong arm could yet sustain her, His powerful spirit could infuse her with courage to bear and surmount the dark and wicked purposes that might be planning against her.

Having thus secured his prize, beyond the possibility of discovery, we will take up the history of Melliphant, to account for the dreadful assault he had been thus led to commit against the then hapless and ill-fated Rosilia. He had announced among her acquaintance, and even to Sir Howard, that he was on the eve of flying the kingdom, as the only means to secure his safety and elude the vigilance of his creditors,—an artifice merely to conceal

his real intentions, which were to avail himself of the opportunity offered by his cousin Sir Arthur Melliphant's estate in Wales, for the double purpose of screening himself from the laws of his country, and of frequenting a neighbourhood inhabited by Rosilia, who had made upon him so singular and fatal an impression. Tormented by the fire of lawless love, and terrified by the dread of being confined within a noxious prison for life, his soul became as it were the habitation of demons, starting at every shadow, and supposing that every one who accidentally crossed his path was a bailiff laying snares to entrap him. He rarely permitted himself to leave the close shelter given by some small, obscure apartments in his cousin's spacious and elegant mansion, determined there to live a voluntary prisoner until circumstances might occur to favour the execution of a plot he had formed to obtain Rosilia, and secrete her in the mansion of Sir Arthur, and afterwards to fly with her to another kingdom.

A thousand schemes were suggested to him for the accomplishment of such a project, but a thousand times were they rejected as impracticable; until at length a report circulated around the neighbourhood reached his ear also, that General De Brooke was in want of a male servant, who as occasion required might act as coachman. Perfectly well acquainted with a young man in the service of Sir Arthur, of a bold and enterprising temper, whom upon many occasions he had found very useful to himself, it imme-

diately struck him that for a powerful bribe he might be made a willing tool to serve him in the capacity desired by the General. The young man having been bought over accordingly, repaired to the Bower, and was hired as we have seen by Mrs. De Brooke;—his looks and manners having terrified and prepossessed Rosilia, not without reason, against him.

This agent had no sooner set down Mrs. De Brooke and her daughter at the house of Mrs. Boville than he hastened to give due information of it to his nefarious employer.

“ ’Tis well,” answered he; “ return to your post, I may soon require your services.”

Melliphant was well acquainted with every part of the grounds belonging to the house but recently occupied by Mrs. Boville. Whilst undergoing repair he had wandered over them repeatedly. There was not a winding alley or turning that was unknown to him. The isolated situation in which the vault entombing the ancient inhabitants of the dwelling lay, he also knew.

It had been discovered to him by Sir Howard Sinclair, whose misanthropic propensity to the visitation of tombs, or to wander amidst churchyard graves, we have already noticed, and who, on a visit to Sir Arthur, in passing near the house now in the occupation of Mrs. Boville, would, in company with Melliphant, often alight from his horse or curriole to make a descent to the sepulchre—amidst those

remains, which divested of their life-giving principles, were mouldering into dust! It was there, like the vulture seeking for its food, Sir Howard loved to hover, and indulge his gloomy taste in meditations suited to it.

Thus the spot had become familiar to Melliphant, who, since the residence of Rosilia at the neighbouring mansion, had never ceased to wander in its vicinity, like an evil and disturbed spirit, viewing the tomb as an asylum in cases of necessity; leaving it at times to take only a hasty circuit amidst the interior of the grounds, under the shade of those groves, whose avenues could offer so many escapes, to ward off that attention he was so fearful of attracting.

It was thus that Rosilia had chanced to see him. He had passed her, as we have described, not being able to deny himself the supreme felicity of gratifying awhile his senses; burning with the desire of feasting his eyes once more upon a form, so long withheld from his outward vision—admitted to his mental but through the medium of a delirious and frenzied fancy.

CHAPTER XXIII.

“ This first false passion of his breast
Roll'd like a torrent o'er the rest.
He sue for mercy! He dismay'd
By wild words of a timid maid!”

BYRON.

EXULTING in the hazard which had enabled him thus desperately, and skilfully so far, to execute the dark plan he had formed for securing to himself Rosilia, a sort of dizzy and maddening sensation of hope filled the brain of Melliphant on quitting the tomb in which he had concealed the unhappy girl,

“ Still dark in a damp vault, and still alone,”

life and a sense of her misery returning together.

Impatient and breathless, his first object was to confer with his abettor, to whom he owed this favourable commencement of his plot. His next was to fly himself with all dispatch to the castle of Sir Arthur, where he had held his sojourn under fear of detection from his creditors, there to make arrangements for further secreting his prize, and there to await until the shades of night favoured her removal from the tomb.

Darkly ruminating over his fiend-like intention, he

found it would be totally impossible to put into immediate execution his first project, of conveying Rosilia to the coast, and thence in a smuggling vessel embark with her for a foreign shore. In the present instant, the only expedient he could devise, and that which seemed to promise in its issue the most prosperous fulfilment of his desires, was, to detain Rosilia closely shut up beyond the power of human search to discover, in an isolated part of Sir Arthur's dwelling,—the chamber that had proved to himself of late so effectual a refuge in evading the pursuit of which he was in dread. In still availing himself of its security it would also afford him the power of keeping Rosilia a captive during a certain interval of time—the means assuredly the best towards putting her into his complete possession; for, notwithstanding any deference he might pay her, how could she with any propriety reappear amidst her family and friends, after having lived privately with him in the same habitation, under the name and character of his wife!

The dwelling, an old baronial castle, was in itself retired and remote, rarely frequented by its owners, and, with the exception of that side which, for the accommodation of the family, had undergone some handsome improvements, was wholly neglected and deserted; the servants in charge of the place were also few, and mostly in his service, so that no detection was likely, and the release of his beautiful prisoner was hardly to be apprehended. Giving himself to the dominion of these evil machinations, the

most rapid and blissful train of images floated over his fancy, engendering hopes of a sure and speedy recompense at hand, equivalent to the unwearied exertions he had made towards the accomplishment of his purpose.

Such being his well-concerted plot, as soon as the hour of ten arrived, and the night became dark and gloomy, typical of the iniquitous deed he meditated, (like the nocturnal bird, drawn by the instinct that impels it from the covert of the light of day,) Melliphant mounted the chaise brought to him by his trusty hireling, and ordered it to be driven as near the tomb as was possible. Borne slowly, on account of the caution necessary to be observed, how long seemed the interval ere he alighted, and on foot proceeded in the direction leading to the spot which engulfed his victim!

The fever of intemperate joy revelled through every vein whilst he searched for the stone that shut from his sight her who had ever dazzled it by the brilliancy of her beauty! The indefatigable industry he had through so long a period made use of to sully the vestal purity of his victim—every defeat served only to aggravate the desire for the possession of such a gem; its every additional lustre, as it shone upon him, caused him the more to aim at its destruction; the hitherto insuperable difficulties which had opposed him, worked him into a species of frenzy,—and influenced him at last to the measure he had

adopted. Existence since her absence from London had been but one continual torment. To make her his own, or die in the attempt, had now become the object of his being.

Having placed his accomplice at the mouth of the sepulchre, impatient as he was to view his captive, no sooner had he raised the stone that hid her from his gaze, than Rosilia, grown desperate, in the hope that one courageous effort might save her from further tyranny, with a strength almost supernatural sprang forward to endeavour to escape.

Although unconscious of her design, and but little prepared to encounter such resistance, armed by the infernal ragings within him, he caught her in his strong grasp, deaf to her cries and heart-imploing accents for release.

“ Shall I regard the pleadings of her,” said he, in tones of irony, “ to whom I have so often pleaded in vain? Did I not confide to you the insurmountable passion with which you had inspired me, and did I ever meet your clemency? Never! no, never! Rosilia, spare your cries, my heart is steeled against their influence; having obtained my prize, think you I shall relinquish it? Suppress your fears: tremble not, but place an implicit confidence in my honour; I come not as a ruffian to destroy, but as a friend to protect. You are perfectly safe in my hands; for however, barbarous girl, you may have injured me, trust me, it is not my intention here to hurt one hair of your

head. You might rather rejoice to see me, since I come to give you liberation from this dreary and sombre dwelling,—from the company of the dead,—where, if report speaks true, the midnight ghost is seen to stalk near the spot where its remains lie interred. But be of better courage; my arm is strong to defend you from every danger, be it ghostly or otherwise.”

He spoke thus, with the malignant view of exciting those superstitious fears within her sometimes even prevailing with the brave and wise; hoping that in shrinking from his description it might induce her to cling to him with the greater confidence and security.

Having, however, no other dread than of himself, and but too well aware of the object of such language, Rosilia, though with but a faint hope of being heard, uttered loud and repeated cries for assistance. Sensible himself of fear, arising from the possibility of surprise by some one unexpectedly passing by, the stillness of the night favouring the audibleness of her screams, he brutally threatened to bind a handkerchief about her mouth, or to leave her entombed, perhaps for ever. Her white garments floating in the wind, and her hair wildly and loosely dishevelled, the determined Melliphant, with the assistance of his accomplice, began bearing her away, Rosilia still screaming for help.

They had nearly reached the chaise, which stood close by the opening of a by-path, and which had not without difficulty made its way thither. Totter-

ing under his fair burden, Melliphant was proceeding as rapidly as he could to place her within it, and to seat himself beside her. Whose arm was it which suddenly checked him in his purpose? Whose voice was it that, with undaunted accent, sounded in his ear, bidding him stop, and, in warrior-like tones, commanding him to give an account of himself, and the ignoble action he was performing? Whose but the Lord Deloraine's, the noble champion of injured innocence and virtue!

“Let go your hold, villain!” cried the peer, who was accompanied by a friend of not less spirit or bravery than himself, “and stand on your defence. The situation in which we find the lady, the lateness of the hour, the force you use, sufficiently betray you, and proclaim the deed you are about to be an evil one!”

Wrath, fury, vengeance, at being thus arrested, alternately possessed Melliphant; having nothing left but to enter upon the combat demanded of him so imperiously, secretly armed, he resolved to resist to the last drop of his blood his unexpected antagonist. Having withdrawn his hold from Rosilia, she sank fainting on the turf. He drew from his pocket a pistol, which, devoid of principle or honour, with an assassin-like assault, he instantly aimed at the breast of Lord Deloraine, but which, in the struggle that ensued, as if by retributive justice, went off unexpectedly and lodged its contents in the body of Melliphant,—thus doomed to receive his punishment by his own

hand, and by the very weapon he had carried for his own defence in the perpetration of his villainies. His accomplice, although pursued by Lord Deloraine's friend, succeeded in effecting his escape.

The report of the pistol recalled Rosilia to a painful sense of existence; she attempted to rise, but her strength failing, she could only with sighs and moans pronounce that name so dear to her,—the name of Douglas! for it was his voice she had recognised in its address to Melliphant. In drawing near to lend her his assistance, what was Lord Deloraine's astonishment, dismay, and anguish, in finding in the female he had rescued his beloved Rosilia!

“Powers of mercy!” exclaimed he, “it is Rosilia! it is my Rosilia!”

The strong and secret sympathies that had so long united them, bound and concealed as by a web, seemed at that moment to become completely unravelled. Supporting her in his outstretched arms, one knee bent upon the earth, the heart of Rosilia, so long oppressed, could only reply by tears, flowing so pathetically, and melting Douglas into an excess of tenderness not to be described.

Thrown together by such an unexpected incident, it was not surprising that their feelings, long suppressed, should then at last confide, unite, and blend together into the most perfect concord and association. Unable to sustain herself, still supported in his encircling arms, her beauteous head reclining upon

his manly form, unconscious of what he uttered, Douglas breathed into her ear the most tender and impassioned language of love. The peril in which his life had been placed on her account, a grateful sense of his being her deliverer, and a secret joy combined, pouring their overwhelming influence into her bosom,—each mutually awaking to the certainty and bliss of being beloved,—it was no wonder that the heart of Rosilia, with all its most susceptible feelings, beat in response to that of Douglas.

A stranger stood before them, his eye intently gazing upon the heart-dissolving scene! Mute he remained, amaze and wonder having astounded his every faculty! The lamp Melliphant had borne, cast upon the earth, but not yet extinguished, shed forth its beams, broad and full, over the form, countenance, and lineaments of her so indelibly imprinted upon his memory!

An exclamation bursting from his lips sounded upon the ear of Douglas, who, rising from his recumbent posture, as he led Rosilia from the spot, ejaculated, “Harcourt, we have been friends, but we have been also rivals; suspend your curiosity till a more convenient occasion, and you shall know all. For the present, let us consider how we can best act. Our chaise,” added he, turning to Rosilia, “will convey you to the friendly asylum of Mrs. Boville.”

Having conducted her to the place where it remained in waiting, and having placed her within it,

he said, "We will now detain you but one moment, as it will be proper, ere we go hence, to afford some help to that unfortunate man."

So saying, he ordered the postillion to the horses' heads, there to await his return.

The chaise that Melliphant had brought with him was still at its post. The driver, who had concealed himself during the bustle which had taken place, then made himself visible, and undertook to help Douglas and Harcourt in raising the almost expiring Melliphant, whose wounds, although deep, as he still breathed, gave hope that they were not mortal. Contriving to place him within the vehicle, in a manner the most commodious to his situation, Douglas commended him to the driver's care, ordering him to convey him back to the spot whence he had brought him.

Returning to Rosilia, Douglas spoke a few consolatory and tender words at the carriage window, telling her that, as Grove Place was so near, his friend and himself preferred walking, and would act as a guard until he had the happiness of placing her under the charge of its kind hostess.

"Ah!" returned Rosilia, "my mother is at this moment at Grove Place, and I fear her sufferings have been great since my absence."

"Her joy will be proportionate upon her again seeing you," answered he; "turn therefore all anxieties aside, to indulge more freely in the bliss of meeting."

It was approaching the hour of twelve, yet none of the family, with the exception of a few dependents, had retired to rest. Collected in one apartment, nothing but sighs or groans from the sorrowing parents interrupted the mournful stillness which reigned. Suddenly the noise of carriage wheels is heard; all is bustle; in a moment lights stir in every direction; all are agitated by hopes and fears. "It is Rosilia!" resounded from below, and in the next moment Mrs. Boville entered to confirm the news.

What words can paint the touching scene, when Douglas, now Lord Deloraine, tenderly supporting his lovely charge, delivered her in safety to her parents! Totally overcome by the various and rapid changes in her feelings, the peculiar nature of her recent sufferings, the joy and gratitude for her delivery, and the unexpected appearance of her father and sister, alternately clasped in the warm embrace of each, tears instead of words became the eloquent demonstration of her feelings—tears which, as they bedewed her cheeks, still brought further relief to mitigate the past tumult and oppression of her heart.

Still overwhelmed, and unable to make reply to any question made her, each looked for explanation with fearful curiosity and impatience to Douglas.

"We had just ascended the last hill," said he, "approaching the domain, when indistinct sounds of a female in distress burst upon our ears. I leaped instantly from the carriage, followed by Harcourt,

and as we advanced whence the sounds issued, we indistinctly perceived figures bearing off a lady with violence. Springing forward, my friend pursued one, who escaped his vigilance, while the other was wounded by his own pistol."

Looking to Rosilia, with an expression at once agitated, inquisitive, and penetrating, he added, addressing the General, "Your daughter can better explain who it was that dared to offer her such violence."

Rosilia gaining strength to speak, and finding it necessary to do so from the appeal just made to her, replied,

"It was he whom I told you I had seen, my dear mother," said she.

"Melliphant!" exclaimed Mrs. De Brooke; "I felt assured it was he; but how came you in his power?"

"Scoundrel! villain!" burst forth the General; "how came it that he succeeded in making this insolent assault upon you?"

"Compose yourself, my dear father," replied Rosilia, with emotion; "my story is short, and can be told in a few words. In the first place, you must know that I have not been off these grounds, however remote you may have supposed me from you; I was concealed where it might well be beyond your possibility to conjecture—within the vault of which Mrs. Boville spoke.

‘They fell upon me, bound me, bore me thence,
And in a dark and dankish vault
There left me.’ ”

Expressions of the utmost consternation and dismay ran through the party. Rosilia again recovering the use of speech, in faint and plaintive accents continued:

“ ’T is true,” said she, “ I was there confined a close prisoner, but as a peculiar blessing of Providence, my companions were only those long-withered forms inclosed in their coffins.”

She then related that while making a sketch of the monument erected by Doctor Lovesworth to the memory of his father, how instantaneously she had been surprised, caught up, and hurried along into what seemed to her a pit beneath her feet; the faintness which had overcome her; the pale rays of the lamp illumining the vault and discovering to her that she was its only living inhabitant; her efforts to escape; and, finally, what she had the most dreaded, the appearance of Melliphant, and his language, which though brutal, might yet be termed respectful attention upon the words she had uttered: her voice then assuming a soft and tender pathos, a sweet blush dyeing her cheeks, she related what had succeeded when her long and well-tried admirer, in the person of Douglas, came as her deliverer.

“To have rescued you from the grasp of the perfidious Melliphant,” exclaimed the General, when

she had finished, "is an eternal obligation conferred upon myself and my family, never to be repaid, never to be cancelled." The presence of Harcourt, who still continued a stranger to him, and his heart overflowing as he spoke, so choked his utterance as to prevent his saying more; when after an interval, addressing himself to Rosilia, he added, "Let us thank God, my dear child, that you have so escaped the power of that audacious man. Happily removed from superstition and its fallacious influence upon the senses, you were assured you had nothing to dread in the gloomy abode in which he shut you but from his persecutions."

Anxious to give Rosilia the repose essential after the alarms she had sustained, the ladies retired from the apartment, when Lord Deloraine, not having had a previous opportunity of introducing his friend Colonel Harcourt, embraced this occasion of so doing. The gentlemen in separating were conducted to their respective chambers.

Harcourt in closing the door of his apartment, at last free from the painful observations of others, gave vent to the conflicts which overpowered him. In beholding a second time the object of his admiration, to behold her encompassed by such extraordinary circumstances, sinking upon the bosom of a preserver—of a rival—and one who was no other than his friend, the much-esteemed, noble, and magnanimous Douglas! his preserver also, and but for whom

he would have perished by the sword,—not a fictitious rival as he had met with in Herbert, but truly such in reality, as acknowledged by his own words: had he not been afforded such a testimony, every after circumstance would have revealed and confirmed the fact.

Becoming acquainted with General De Brooke's retreat from the world, and meeting Douglas by chance in London, upon his return from Scotland, who intimating his intention of immediately quitting it for Glamorganshire, Harcourt availed himself of apparently so propitious an occasion, and declared himself ready to become the companion of his journey; his intention being to form a better acquaintance with Rosilia, in the hope of making himself agreeable to her, and offering himself as the future partner of her life. Having while in India, as we have seen, confided to Douglas his partiality, and having never received from him any discouragement to his pretensions, supposing rather that he might calculate upon ensuring his services on the occasion, he was but little prepared to find in him so formidable a rival. Amidst the general happiness prevailing upon the recovery of Rosilia, he had, as a spectator merely, deeply participated in the same sentiment. But when, in turning his ideas inward upon himself, the unfortunate fate attending his destiny, the sport as it were of fortune, clouds of heaviness oppressed him.

While thus meditating, and pacing to and fro in his private chamber, some one tapped gently at the door, and he heard the voice of his friend soliciting entrance. "Harcourt," said he, on being admitted, "I have not, I trust, suffered in your estimation by what has passed this night; you are too honourable and generous not to do me justice, and to be assured I could never wilfully have played and tampered with your nicest feelings." A profound silence succeeded, after which Douglas added, "Hearken to me with moderation, and I will relate to you some of the circumstances of my past eventful life; and those more particularly connected with what I have this night declared,—'we have been friends, but we have been also rivals.'"

Touched by such an ingenuous appeal, Harcourt advanced, and seating himself near Douglas, replied:

"Your story," said he, "cannot but be gratifying to me, and will, no doubt, confirm me in the high sentiments of esteem I have ever borne you: proceed, but first let me tell you that to-morrow morning I go from hence."

Acutely feeling for the delicate position of his friend, Douglas communicated his narrative; at the conclusion of which Harcourt expressed his high sense of gratitude, mingled with admiration of a conduct towards himself so noble and generous.

"How feeble seem my claims," said he, "when compared with yours! It is you alone who merit the fair object your arm has this night redeemed from

persecution and misery. No one can deserve her if you do not. She is also doubly yours from possessing her entire confidence, declared by her every look, word, and gesture. Providence seems to have designed you for each other, and may approving Heaven shower blessings upon you both !

CHAPTER XXIV.

" How high the bliss that waits on wedded love,
 Best, purest emblem of the bliss above!
 To draw new raptures from another's joy;
 To share each grief, and half its stings destroy;
 Of one fond heart to be the slave and lord;
 Bless and be bless'd, adore and be adored:
 To own the link of soul, the chain of mind,
 Sublimest friendship, passion most refined,—
 Passion to life's last evening hour still warm,
 And friendship brightest in the darkest storm!"

Prize Poem.

FROM the late circumstances befalling Douglas, it might seem indeed as if fortune, notwithstanding the many rude calamities he had met with, still regarded him as her favoured child;—to be brought back to Wales at a moment of such extreme necessity to the timely succour of the distressed Rosilia, his mind ever full of her, engaging as she did every thought and faculty of his soul; to be led to the spot to act in her defence when her situation had become so perilous; and after so long an absence from his native country, to return to it at so critical a juncture, to receive the last parting blessing of his brother, his nearest surviving relative.

Though always of a feeble constitution, Lord De-

loraine had lingered out existence to its last thread ; till at length, being made sensible of his near dissolution, he expressed a strong desire once again to behold Douglas ; in whose arms he breathed his last !—an event which, however melancholy, had not been altogether unexpected by Douglas, he having paired to Scotland upon the intelligence of his brother's illness sooner than he had otherwise intended. In right of succession the family estate and title devolving upon him, he became in consequence Lord Deloraine ; but this new dignity was not likely to produce an alteration in the heart and mind of one whose genuine worth and true nobility of soul had acquired such strength and consistency, superior to exaltation derived from any worldly cause whatever.

Not desiring to prolong his stay and absence from his friends in Wales beyond what was incumbent upon him with regard to a due observance of the necessary arrangements consequent on the death of his brother, he departed from Scotland with the intention at some later period of returning to it, and of probably making it the chief place of his future residence. Passing through London he chanced, as has been said, to fall in with Harcourt, whose salutations were most particularly warm, rejoiced to meet a friend to whom he was so signally indebted, and also to avail himself of the occasion of prosecuting his journey into Glamorganshire.

Perfectly aware of Harcourt's motives in going thither, Douglas spoke but little, absorbed in silent

reverie upon that fate which seemed ever, as concerning Rosilia, to oppose his passion and to separate him from her. Scarcely had the only true attachment of which he had ever felt susceptible, and which if subdued for a time had never become extinguished, rekindled in his soul its pure and holy fires, than it was again to meet with repression. Dread, anxiety, and uncertainty infused their bitterness within him. Rigidly adhering to the highest principles of social duty, Rosilia herself must decide the point, thought he: but in thus reflecting he trembled under the possibility of Harcourt meeting her acceptance; having made up his mind not to proffer his own claims unless his friend met with a denial.

Harcourt had been well acquainted abroad with Mrs. Melbourne, in whose estimation he held some share; and Douglas had assured him of a cordial and hospitable reception from her sister Mrs. Boville. The long-trying patience of Douglas, his perseverance, and his noble self-denial and extreme delicacy in having given the priority to Harcourt in his claims on her to whom he had been formerly and still was so devotedly attached, were crowned at last with reward in being providentially the instrument of her preservation from tyranny, cruelty, and oppression. And amidst the horror and torturing anxiety, of seeing her reduced to such a situation, how precious also had been to him those moments, like sweet balsam to his wounded feelings, when he awoke to the delicious ecstasy, the full and perfect consciousness of

being beloved,—her sorrow, sighs, and tears, in clinging to him for protection, revealing a language impossible to be mistaken!

In joining the party assembled in the breakfast-room, not perceiving the object his eyes were in search of, he found, on inquiring, that she was prevented that morning from leaving her chamber through indisposition. A thousand ideas concerning her personal safety might have troubled him, had he not been tranquillized by the observations he gathered of the natural excellence of her constitution, rendering the symptoms of cold by which she was attacked but of little importance.

Greeting him under his newly inherited title of Lord Deloraine, the ladies Boville and Melbourne asked after his friend Colonel Harcourt, for whose sudden departure he was under the necessity of making some plausible excuse.

Mrs. De Brooke felt almost persuaded that Colonel Harcourt was the same whose card had been delivered to her as Mr. Harcourt when in pursuit of Rosilia, and who had so indefatigably kept his post about the house of Mrs. Herbert. How truly mysterious seemed his conduct, no less at the present moment than formerly, appearing and disappearing in a manner so sudden! might it be on their families' account? She awaited to make her surmises known to the General.

“My dear,” exclaimed he, with looks and gestures expressive of the highest gratification, “I know it,

I know all you would say, and more; it is not I from you, but you from me, who may look for information. The interview I have just had with Lord Deloraine has filled me with content, joy, and happiness. He has been ever the warm admirer of our child Rosilia, of which he has made me the most open acknowledgement; he is in a word, her warm and loving suitor, and will shortly become, by the good pleasure of the Supreme, her warm and loving husband."

In the fulness of their delight each happy parent embraced the other, and the General added, "You see, my dear, in such charming prospects opening upon us, in the happiness of one of our children, and in the liberality of poor Robert, the possibility of promoting that of the other, not to mention the enlargement of our own comforts, that if our union began in tears it is likely to end in smiles. Your dear respectable aunt Boville and her sister Mrs. Melbourne are about being informed, by our son-in-law who is to be, of his long-existing sentiments for our child, —and they will be, doubtless, quite enchanted with the idea of the wedding which will in consequence shortly take place. You can yourself apprise Oriana of it, but caution her not to intimate any of this new intelligence to her sister, whose mind must be kept calm, and at the present free from such topics, —as when well enough to appear amongst us, Lord Deloraine himself will make to her the disclosure of his hopes and wishes, and that in a manner

the best suited to a mind so delicately refined as hers."

The General having thus amplified upon the subject with something of the garrulity of advancing age and the communicative frankness of his character, we shall only add that Lord Deloraine became the successful and acknowledged suitor of the fair Rosilia. "Take her," said the General, "she is yours; and if I mistake not, her pure and virgin affections have been ever yours."

Sensible of a gladness of soul, of a joy of heart long a stranger to him, powerful emotions ran through the frame of His Lordship in raising the hand he held, and in pressing it upon his lips. From henceforth passing his days continually in the presence of his destined bride, how truly she was impressed upon his fancy, how much and how wholly his mind and heart were occupied with and directed towards her, was manifest in every affectionate glance, in every expression of his countenance: every polished, easy, and graceful gesture was alike correspondent to his internal harmony; his every softened accent seemed to say, Rosilia, how I love thee! And such were not the mere outward semblances of passion; they were the pleasing, the beautiful effects of true and genuine love,—of feelings arising from a grateful sense of happiness conferred, in finding himself beloved by her, from whom he once conceived his early irregularities had separated him for ever!

As a stream, clear and bright, becomes foul with

weeds, and stagnates by its distant meanderings from its pure and pellucid source,—so the active imagination, the capacious intellect of Douglas, those high and valuable endowments, had, by an undue use of them, been perverted. But drawn from his former dissipated life to the cultivation of his talents,—directed to their true and only means of usefulness, the general good of society,—from the false and insinuating pleasures of sense, he became acted upon by motives, and guided by principles, of a quite opposite tendency. Most happy was the change, and most delightful to contemplate!

We have seen him gradually rising from the penitent sufferer into the man gifted with those high, those transcendent qualities, so ennobling to human nature!—scrupulous in the discharge of every moral obligation; conscientiously just in all his actions; and with a zeal the most persevering and devout, shunning every species of evil. A reformation so complete, who could behold without offering their homage of admiration! No wonder, then, that the warm, the tender, affectionate heart of Rosilia, overflowing with sensibility, was melted with a joy unspeakable!

At her own particular request, the wedding ceremony was postponed, in order that it might take place at the Bower, and under the auspices of Dr. Lovesworth; the private retirement of that spot favouring, in her idea, the sacredness of the ceremony, and thence better suited to act in accordance

with the religious sanctity of her feelings. He who was to act as officiating minister, and now the acknowledged relation of Mrs. De Brooke, was written to by the General, in order to inform him of the combination of pleasing events that had arisen in his family; and also to hasten his coming, for the purpose of joining the happy couple, and of participating in the general satisfaction reigning amongst them.

The worthy Doctor, rejoicing at the information, determined to set off with all dispatch for the mansion of Mrs. Boville; there to tender in person his affectionate felicitations to Mrs. De Brooke on account of the delightful discovery of his being her cousin; and after which, to act in his official capacity of uniting her blooming daughter to the much-admired and noble Lord Deloraine.

The moment he received the gratifying intelligence, he made a new will, nominating his cousin, Mrs. De Brooke, his principal inheritor,—for reasons not more of esteem and affection than of her being his nearest relation; nor were the parents of Philimore forgotten, bequeathing them a legacy. To the fair sisters Oriana and Rosilia, his second cousins, he left £10,000 each, intending to bestow the portion designed for the latter as a wedding gift on his part; to which the General would have added a few thousands, but His Lordship would not listen to any such donation: amply endowed himself in the fair object bestowed upon him, his dearest and most devout

wishes were realized ; he required nothing further ; his measure of happiness was complete on this side Heaven ! Yielding, therefore, to solicitations so enforced, the General revoked his intention, finding truly that no equivalent he had in his power to make, could in any way answer to the handsome settlement made upon his daughter by her generous-minded partner.

The wedding taking place according to the arrangements stated, Lord Deloraine lost no time in repairing with his enchanting bride to the seat of his ancestors. The regrets of parting from her parents, sister, and friends, together with the dear little Rose, whom she had already taught to lisp the word “Mamma !” might have thrown a transient cloud of sorrow around Rosilia, had it not been chased by the delicate attentions of her husband, and the conviction that their absence would be but short.

Oriana, in the sympathy she had felt for her sister during the whole previous preparations for the wedding, had become in a great measure lost to a sense of her own private regrets, having learnt submission to the will of Providence. The loss of Philimore, and the subsequent sufferings she had endured in relation to that event, had softened her temper and rendered her more reflective. Thus her days passed on, and not unblest.

Her wishes and desires, even in the brightest hours of expectation, had ever been moderate ; but having lost him in whom those hopes, desires, and

wishes had centered, her then widowed heart reposed itself upon the present, seldom straying beyond the tranquil boundary of its home,—there to cherish the memory of Philimore, recall him to her fancy, dwell upon his accents, and trace the even serenity of his countenance ; catch, as she was wont to do, those pure beams of affection emanating from his eyes ;—and during the still hour of night, when sleep had closed her outward sense, and the busy active intelligences within were alone open—could it then be mere imagination, could it then be the mere ideal vision of fancy ?—or was it that her soul, transported into those eternal abodes in which he dwelt, presented a real existing being to her view, the perfect symmetry of the human form resplendent with beauty ? for then no longer did he appear, as during her waking moments, the resemblance but of a fleeting shadow !

Rising from her couch, and reflecting upon her dreams in such moments, a powerful conviction would steal upon her mind, that the reciprocity of affection she had enjoyed with Philimore would be renewed and perpetuated for ever in eternity.

CONCLUSION.

“The smile or frown of awful Heaven,
To virtue or to vice is given.”

IN the course of a short period from the event of his daughter's marriage, General De Brooke fixed his permanent residence in the beautiful villa, Mount Zephyr, where we found him and his family upon the commencement of our history. The late Lord Deloraine, to whom he had let it, having returned to Scotland for the benefit of his native air, the place had fallen into the hands of another tenant, who leaving it in a state of great improvement, the General and Mrs. De Brooke were induced, upon its being advertised for sale, to become the purchasers.

Among the most intimate and social of their neighbours were their old friends the amiable Sir Charles and Lady Valpée. Mr. Frederick Valpée was absent from home, having left his paternal seat for a long-projected tour abroad.

It may be well conceived that the spare apartments in the mansion of the De Brookes were often occupied by Mrs. Boville, her sister Mrs. Melbourne, and the good Dr. Lovesworth, whenever his mini-

sterial duties permitted his affording his friends the indulgence of a visit.

Mrs. Arden, in living to become a widow, and in throwing off those restraints which formerly occasioned a variance between her brother and herself, became more united to the individual members of his family—leaving it to be supposed that her affections, no longer operated upon by selfish motives, resumed their early impressions. Frugal in the management of her income, which was considerable, she was afforded the benevolent gratification of making future liberal settlements on her nieces, whom she nominated her principal inheritors. And thus she experienced the grateful attentions of her family during a long course of a contented and respected old age.

It was also destined for Mrs. Philimore to become a widow, her husband not being able to survive the loss of a son, upon whom he had bestowed so perfect an education, and who had been at once his pride and glory. His widow lived to a good old age, manifesting to the latest period of it the true piety and resignation of the Christian character; keeping her social affections alive by frequent intercourse with her long-trying friend Mrs. De Brooke, and the sight of her ever-loved Oriana.

Lord Deloraine and his lady, leaving their magnificent domain and dwelling, descending to him from a long line of Scottish nobles, situated not far from the winding and meandering Forth, proceeded on a tour through the Western parts, leading towards

Glasgow, from whence, the autumn being fine, they extended their journey to the Lakes. In the following spring they revisited England, upon which event the joy prevailing at the villa of General De Brooke may be more easily conceived than described, extending to Mrs. Boville and Mrs. Melbourne.

The latter was then re-united to her husband, who, since his return from India, had, in consideration of his services, been promoted to the rank of Major-General, and was then, with much honour and credit to himself, occupying a staff appointment.

Mrs. Melbourne could scarcely be prevailed upon to relinquish her little god-daughter Rose, even to her father and his lady; nor did she do so, until she had made the stipulation of having her ultimately under her care, as her own adopted child.

Soon after the return of Lord and Lady Deloraine to their family mansion in Scotland, the birth of a son put them in possession of an heir; and, two years after, a daughter followed: so that this tender and attached couple were blessed with progeny, who early gave promise of inheriting the amiable qualities of their parents.

Harcourt, in having yielded Rosilia to a rival such as Lord Deloraine, did not find his disappointment so difficult to surmount as he had previously experienced in resigning her to Herbert, by whose mother he had been so falsely beguiled,—and was afterwards married to one calculated to bestow upon him the blessings of the connubial state.

As to Sir Howard Sinclair, ever ruled by his love of wealth, he married the widow Belmour, on her side influenced to the union by the honour she felt conferred by his title. The promised gratification of her pride, however, in being styled Her Ladyship, more than met with its counterbalance, in the ill-usage she received from the Baronet; from whom she was compelled to separate, contenting herself with a circumscribed allowance from her own property. While thus becoming the chastiser of her who had married him from motives of ambition, Sir Howard, also, was himself doomed to receive a punishment, due in a manner to his levities and vices. Sporting his curricule with a pair of young spirited horses, he was thrown from his seat; the rampant pair, plunging forward, drew the vehicle over the leg of Sir Howard, who had in the fall dislocated his shoulder. Having suffered amputation, he was obliged to hobble through life with an amputated limb, receiving by this means that final check to his vanity, which we may hope proved profitable towards effecting his reformation.

With regard to Melliphant, whom we left at his cousin Sir Arthur's ancient castle in Wales, no sooner were his wounds healed, than he was discovered by his creditors, whose demands against him being great and numerous, he was confined to the Fleet for the rest of his life,—giving him leisure for that reflection on his past proceedings, so necessary ere the last hour might surprise him, and suddenly close the scene of an ill-spent existence.

It remains only for us now to say, that time in its progress found Oriana again adorned with all her native vivacity; and Valpée, having returned home from his tour abroad, was often led to reflect upon the possibility of her entertaining a second attachment: in short, as we have elsewhere remarked, no woman was more adapted to draw him from the natural reserve of his character than Oriana.

The memory of the past, connected with the night of the *fête champêtre* in honour of his coming of age, she being the fair partner he had selected upon that occasion to open the ball, often returned with a pleasing charm upon his memory. And as Oriana on her part had ever felt a strong predilection for the amiable Valpée, she felt assured that had she never seen Philimore, and had never been withdrawn from the neighbourhood she then inhabited, it would have been undoubtedly Valpée to whom her first affections would have been engaged.

The respective families on either side much desiring the union, there is little doubt that in due course of time it took place.

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